

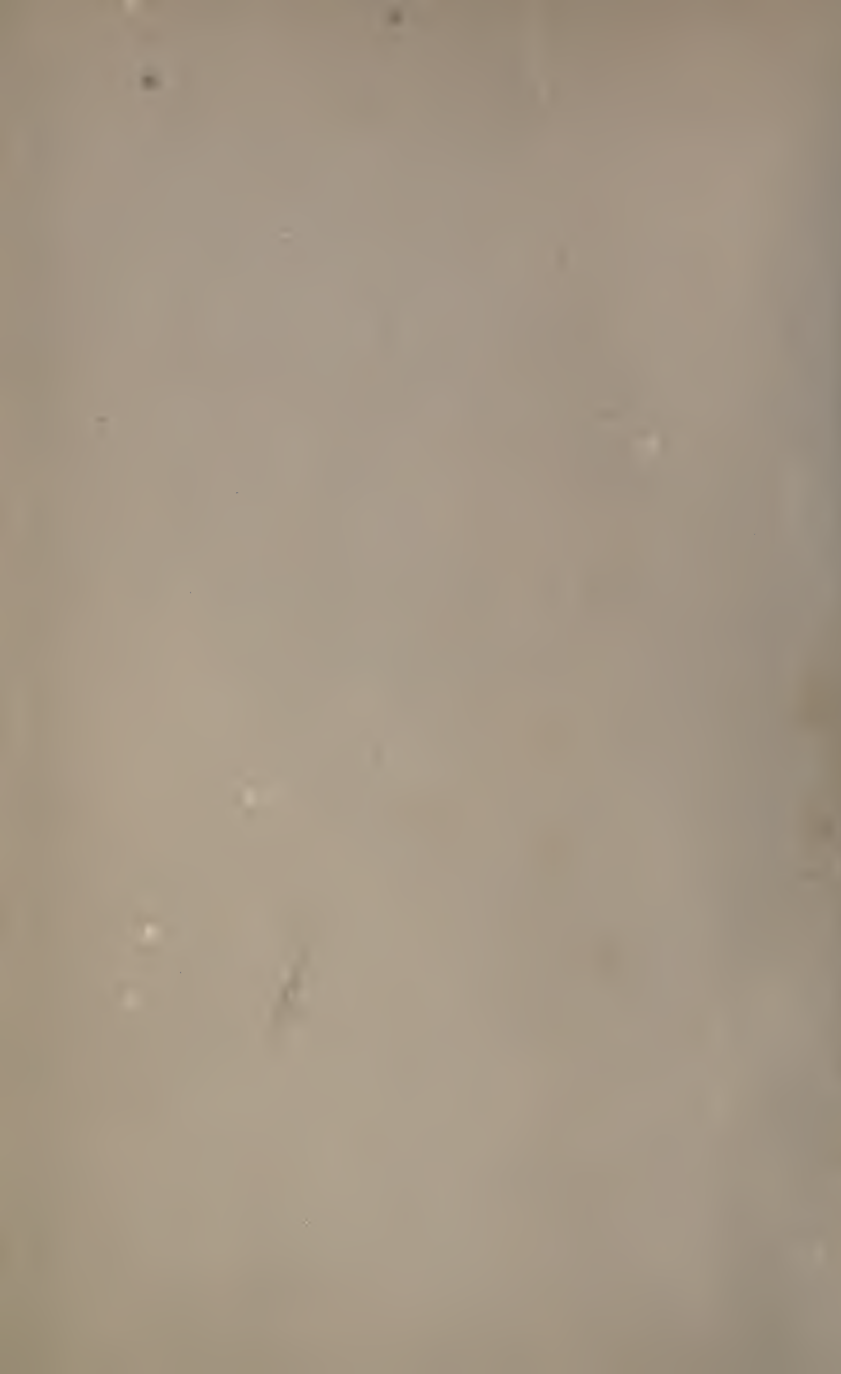
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THE FOUNDATIONS
OF SOCIETY



THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

By

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Preface

THE historical method has been adopted in the following pages. To ascertain what inquirers have held and taught respecting the *life* of society enables one to trace with greater accuracy the development of social relationships; to test whatever conclusions may be reached, in the light of the results of their investigations; and to perceive more clearly how theories either tell upon society, or are the reflection of the ideas and customs of the time at which they are formulated. History is our instructor, and it is manifestly a great advantage to read its pages with care and note its lessons. The trouble entailed in tracing historical movements, or in reading the history itself, is amply repaid by the clearer light which is thrown upon social life.

To offer an explanation of society in terms of one of its elements is to present an inadequate interpretation of social phenomena. This holds good even though the element selected should be that which is most distinctive and most prominent. The scientific treatment of society necessitates a careful consideration of all the essential elements of social life. For society is the expression of many contributing factors, which are intimately related, and, indeed, run the one into the other. Accordingly, in investigating the Foundations of Society, all the elements of society have been submitted to a careful examination, with the object of ascertaining what contribution each of them makes to the life of "associated humanity."

The time has not yet come when the results of industrial and other associations or societies can be stated in highly specialized scientific form. That, however, must ultimately be possible. For society has its own phenomena, which are susceptible of a scientific setting. Inability to tabulate results and infer general principles from them at the present time cannot, therefore, be taken as evidence that patient research may not in the future accomplish both of these things; but in the present state of our knowledge the utmost that can be done is to examine with care the operations of ethical and economic, political and religious principles, and to try and influence the social life of the day, to mould it after the pattern of the highest ideal, and to note with gratitude how the social good is being gradually reached on an ever extending scale.

I have to acknowledge with cordial thanks the many useful suggestions I have received from my friends, Mr. Matthew Blair, Mr. James C. Murdoch, M.A., Mr. William Millar, who have kindly read the proofs as the work was passing through the press.

J. WILSON HARPER.

THE GRANGE, ALLOA,
January, 1899.

Contents

CHAPTER I.

	PAGES
THE ORIGIN OF SOCIETY—THE TESTIMONY OF NATURAL SCIENCE	1-29

I. Definition of Aims and Statement of Method. II. Opinions of Scientific Experts. III. Maximum of Assumptions respecting Pre-historic Man Considered.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN OF SOCIETY—THE TESTIMONY OF MENTAL SCIENCE	30-71
---	-------

I. Importance of Psychology. II. Bearing of Social Conceptions on Conceptions of Mental Phenomena. III. Organism Theory of Society. IV. Historical Research. V. Evolution. VI. Psychological Postulates. VII. Conceptions of Society.

CHAPTER III.

THE ETHICAL BASIS OF SOCIETY	72-137
--	--------

I. Classification of Motives. II. Ethics of Greek Schools. III. Ethics of the Hebrews. IV. Ethics of Modern Schools. V. Ethics and Environment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ETHICAL BASIS OF SOCIETY—EVOLUTIONARY AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS	138-174
--	---------

I. Relation of Evolutionary Ethics to the Individual and to Society. II. Source of Ethical Law. III. The Cosmic and Ethical Process. IV. Christian Ethics. V. Ethical Standard for Nations.

CHAPTER V.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF SOCIETY	175-209
---	---------

I. Altruistic Element. II. Service which Economics renders to Social Life. III. The Relation of Economics to the other Sciences of Life. IV. The subject-matter of Economics.

CHAPTER VI.		PAGES
THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF SOCIETY—INDIVIDUALISM . . .		210-243
I. The Genesis and Development of Individualism. II. Types of Individualism. III. The Factors which have made for its Acceptance.		
CHAPTER VII.		
THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF SOCIETY—SOCIALISM . . .		244-284
I. Recent Development of Socialism. II. Its First Methods and Ideals. III. Its Ethical End. IV. Its Claims. V. Its Proposals. VI. Misconceptions as to what Socialism aims at. VII. Work under Socialistic Rule. VIII. The Debt we owe to Socialists.		
CHAPTER VIII.		
THE POLITICAL BASIS OF SOCIETY		285-329
I. Economic Science and Political Art. II. Political Relationships. III. Political Authority. IV. Need for Political Education. V. Parliamentarianism on its Trial. VI. The Cabinet and State Departments. VII. Second Chambers. VIII. The Things with which Government may interfere.		
CHAPTER IX.		
THE RELIGIOUS BASIS OF SOCIETY		330-370
I. The Importance of the Religious Element in Social Life. II. Opposition to Religion by some Exponents of Natural Science and by Utilitarians. III. Religion Tested by the Social Life Produced. IV. Supernatural Element in Christianity. V. Evolution and Religion. VI. What Religion Denotes. VII. "Notes" of Christianity. VIII. Urgent Need for the Application of Christian Principles to the Social Life of the Day.		

I

The Origin of Society

THE TESTIMONY OF NATURAL SCIENCE

I

THE science of human society deals with man in his social relationships. It inquires into the origin of these relationships, investigates their character, and endeavours to determine their ultimate goal.

The province which belongs to the science is very wide, while the questions it raises and aims at answering are full of absorbing interest. An explanation of the formation and development of society being that which is attempted, the motives which bring men together, and the operations of the principles which give to men a common interest, must first be carefully examined. When this has been accomplished, it is next necessary to analyse the constituent elements of society and show how they act and react upon each other. Investigations must be conducted on the assumption that social relationships are susceptible of differentiation. They cannot, however, be treated

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

as isolated and independent units, but as intimately related, and governed by general principles which can be apprehended with more or less distinctness.

Little service is rendered to the science of society if data be merely collected together, or even if an analysis only of these data be made. To make the science useful and promote its further advance it is needful to trace with care the operations of all ethical and economic, political and religious principles, which, operating upon human actions, have made society what it is.

But in addition to offering an explanation of the formation and development of society and making an analysis of its phenomena, it is further necessary to make a careful investigation of those conditions under which social life is best realized. This at once implies a high estimate of human life as such, and lifts the science of society out of the neglect from which it has so long suffered, and gives to it the prominence which it deserves.

Covering such a wide domain, and dealing with questions of the highest value, the science of society must take careful note of all biological and psychological data, investigate the bases on which ethical conceptions and economic principles rest, and endeavour to estimate the exact worth of political maxims and religious beliefs. It must, indeed, set itself to the task of reviewing the nature and value of all the factors that have moulded society. It must show what society is, how it has come to assume the character it possesses, and how it can be still further perfected. All that belongs to human life comes

THE ORIGIN

legitimately within its purview ; and material things are considered in the light of man's well-being.

In defining thus the province of our subject and outlining the task that must be undertaken, it is not, however, overlooked that complaint is often made that we have really no science of society. Mr. Benjamin Kidd has stated this complaint in terms emphatic enough,¹ and Mr. Herbert Spencer has written a number of chapters with the express design of showing the need for, and the difficulties in the way of, attaining to a social science.² The guiding principle which dominates the whole of Mr. Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy* is that of natural causation ; but unlike Mr. Kidd, he is not without hopes that "everything which enters into the complex system of human affairs may yet, if due diligence is used, be traced back to original causes."³

Whether Mr. Spencer's anticipations be realized or not, there are at least abundant reasons for holding that the foundations upon which society rests can be ascertained ; that the motives which have brought men together and the principles which give to them a social life can be analysed ; that the operations of the great unifying factors of human society can be traced in broad outline ; and that these data afford a *Weltanschauung*, "a view of the world" from the standpoint of sociology, and, therefore, also materials which it is the business of the exponents of social science first to differentiate and next to classify, and

¹ Vide *Social Evolution*, pp. 22, *et seq.*

² Vide *The Study of Sociology*, chapters v.-xii.

³ *Ibid.* p. 4.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

that with the object of showing that human life is subject to laws which can be scientifically ascertained.

II

The questions that are raised whenever the origin and development of human society are investigated, if somewhat difficult to answer, have nevertheless a charm and an attraction of their own. The fascination is partly due to the greatness of the difficulties encountered in trying to answer these questions ; for, as the explorer of unknown lands, or the investigator of the secrets of nature is spurred to greater efforts by the very barriers he has to surmount, so the difficulties met in endeavouring to understand the origin and progress of society give to the study a special and absorbing interest. The determination to overcome these difficulties does not, however, entirely explain the magnetic influence which men at all times have experienced when pondering over the constitution of society. The true explanation is discovered only when, on reflection, man perceives that he naturally desires to know the nature of the strange bonds which bind him to his fellows, and to ascertain the content of the social relationships in which he has a permanent interest ; and further finds that hopes are entertained that light may be thrown upon the great and final issues of human life, by the study of the essential elements of society.

For these reasons mainly, thoughtful men have tried to pierce the intense darkness that has gathered round the beginnings of social relationships, and have en-

THE ORIGIN

deavoured to elucidate the mystery which has more or less attended every development of these relationships. They do so to-day with perhaps greater eagerness and fervour than at any previous time. The evolution of all institutions, that of society included, is subjected to a searching scrutiny; and the interest in these investigations is unmistakably heightened since they are invariably conducted with a view to practical ends. The most retiring recluse may find a pleasure in pondering over the problem of *being*, and the man of science a profound satisfaction in unfolding the secrets of nature that have long baffled research; but whether they acknowledge it or not, both feel the beats and throbs of the life of this intensely practical age, and are obliged to confess that theories of *being* or of nature must prove their worth by the practical purposes they serve.

In approaching the study of our subject great caution is necessary; for it must not be assumed that results, final and absolutely beyond dispute, can always be obtained. In the discussion of the essential elements of society by experts the utmost variety of opinion, indeed, still prevails. Moralists, for instance, are divided into opposing schools, and the ethical basis of society is a question of keen controversy. Thus, on the one hand, many have adopted the view first propounded by Shaftesbury, and have merged ethics in psychology; while, on the other, many, following the example first set by Hartley, have largely based all moral distinctions on physiology. To the rigid exponent of natural science

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

ethics is only one of the last products of a long series of physical changes. Again, many moralists have maintained, with the Intellectual School of the eighteenth century, that ethical ideas are dependent upon "the eternal relation of things," or, with the Sentimentalists, that "conscience is the voice of God within," and that moral ideas do not "owe their power to anything non-moral." If the political foundations of society be considered, the same uncertainty is seen to prevail. Politics is largely based on economics, but economists are divided into opposing schools, individualist and collectivist. The attempt to effect a reconciliation of their differences has not yet been successful. To all who are even fairly acquainted with the questions at issue between them, two things are at once apparent: that the political terms *conservatism* and *liberalism* are but the expression of two entirely different ways of discharging obligations, and that finality of judgment respecting political questions is not even within sight. If religion be cited, the same diversity again appears. For, although religion appeals to all that is deepest and truest in human nature, and transcends all other subjects in virtue of its far-reaching influences, yet the difference of opinion prevailing excludes even the hope of final agreement for many years to come.

Since, then, those who have given the closest study to the foundations of society differ so widely, great caution is necessary (*a*) in the collection of material, (*b*) with respect to the methods of inquiry, and (*c*) as to the inferences that are drawn or con-

THE ORIGIN

clusions that are reached. Though difference of opinion prevails, such diversity must not be taken to imply that the operations of general economic and ethical principles cannot be traced with certainty, or that the science of society has not made considerable progress. For, if either of these conclusions were regarded as a legitimate inference, the same argument might be used against all other sciences. A common agreement, for instance, does not exist among the exponents of natural science as to the doctrine of the transmutation of species, neither is full adhesion yet given to the doctrine of progression, "the twin branch of the development theory."¹ Geologists have not settled the age to which some of their most valuable "finds" belong. Archæology, as M. Joly observes, "greeted at first with ironical sneers, or the contempt of incredulity, has by an inevitable reaction given rise to extravagant enthusiasm and to ill-considered systems, which have more than once injured its cause and obstructed its real progress."²

The work which the exponents of all these sciences set themselves to accomplish must be carried on with more or less of the uncertainty that the employment of hypotheses implies; but though there may be many drawbacks and hindrances to the successful prosecution of their work, no informed person concludes that great progress has not been made, or that much that is highly serviceable to mankind has not been accomplished. In like manner it cannot be contended that

¹ Vide Sir Charles Lyell's *Antiquity of Man*, p. 472.

² Vide *Man Before Metals*, by Professor N. Joly, p. 2.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

because the science of society is not so perfect as its exponents desire, a certain amount of progress has not attended the efforts that have been made to discover the ethical and economic, the political and religious principles of which society is the visible expression. On the contrary, it is on all sides acknowledged that much good work has been done, and that the conception of society as a unity, subject to the operation of the above principles, is a guarantee that still greater progress will be made. The hope is, indeed, gradually assuming the form of a firm conviction that the entire content of human relationships will ultimately be known, and that the conditions under which human life can best be realized will ultimately be definitely ascertained. Optimism here, as elsewhere, is a powerful stimulus to further successful endeavours.

III

Inquiries as to the origin of society take us back to the earliest times of which any record is given. The record may be found in the pages of history, or in the results of scientific investigations respecting man in pre-historic times. The question, therefore, meets us at the outset, whether in conducting our inquiries we must limit ourselves to the testimony of history, or whether there is at hand such reliable information respecting man in pre-historic times as would warrant conclusions being drawn touching the origin of society. Close to this lies another and still more important question, namely, whether man's original

THE ORIGIN

state was that of the brute and the savage, or whether he was "substantially civilized."

The attempt to answer these questions satisfactorily has necessitated the collection of much evidence, and the making of many hypotheses. Within recent years evidence and hypotheses have been greatly multiplied. Exponents of natural science have given to man an antiquity which even imagination can scarcely grasp. They have also ascribed to him an origin that connects him with the ape, or some other collateral ancestor among the vertebrate animals. Opinion differs whether man is to be traced back to the ape, or to a still more original stock. Professor Haeckel, while allowing that "the ape-like progenitors of the human race are long since extinct," entertains the hope that "we may still possibly find their fossil bones in the Tertiary rocks of Southern Asia or Africa."¹ But the most recent exponents of natural science, recognising the difficulties in the way of the ape-ancestor theory, have practically abandoned it, and now hold that ape and man have come from the same trunk. They are two separate branches. The ape-branch and the man-branch have had different developments, but they have nevertheless a common origin.²

1. The conclusions deduced from the evidence on which the great antiquity of man is assumed to rest,

¹ Vide *History of Creation*, vol. ii. pp. 276, 277.

² Professor Haeckel holds that the theories of Lamarck and Darwin have been proven, and that all lemurs, all monkeys, and all men are descended from the same stem. Vide Address delivered to the Zoological Society at Cambridge, August 26th, 1898.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

are not marked by uniformity. Some authorities are more emphatic in their statements than others. Sir Charles Lyell makes the human race "contemporary with the mammoth and many other species of mammalia now extinct."¹ He is unwilling, however, to place man further back than the beginning of the post-Pliocene period. The data at his command did not allow him to postulate an earlier origin.² Sir John Lubbock says that "the first appearance of man in Europe dates from a period so remote that neither history nor even tradition can throw any light on his origin or mode of living."³ Mr. Max Müller holds that "we shall never know what primitive man, or the first man on earth may have been," but he adds, "when we speak, nevertheless, of primitive man, we can only mean man as he is represented to us in his earliest works."⁴ M. de Quatrefages confesses that "without prejudging the future, we have been obliged to acknowledge that the problem of the specific origin cannot be solved, or even attempted with the scientific data which we at present possess,"⁵ yet he says that though many "palæontologists of high merit shrink from believing that man belongs to Miocene times," he himself has no difficulty in holding that man was "in existence during the Quaternary epoch."⁶ M. de Quatre-

¹ *Antiquity of Man*, p. 207.

² *Ibid.* p. 228.

³ *Pre-Historic Times*, p. 1.

⁴ *Anthropological Religion*, pp. 184, 185.

⁵ *The Human Species*, p. 129.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 152.

THE ORIGIN

fages, it will be observed, thus agrees with Sir Charles Lyell. Sir John Evans, [who has rendered excellent service to science by his treatise on *Ancient Stone Implements*, speaking as President of the British Association at Toronto,¹ remarks that "of late years the general tendency of those engaged upon the question of the antiquity of the human race has been in the direction of seeking for evidence by which the existence of Man upon the earth could be carried back to a date earlier than that of the Quaternary gravels. There is little doubt that such evidence will eventually be forthcoming, but, judging from all probability, it is not in Northern Europe that the cradle of the human race will eventually be discovered, but in some part of the world more favoured by a tropical climate, where abundant means of subsistence could be procured, and where the necessity for warm clothing did not exist. Within the last few months we have had the report of worked flints having been discovered in the late Pliocene Forest Bed of Norfolk, but in that instance the signs of human workmanship upon the flints are by no means apparent to all observers. But such an antiquity as that of the Forest Bed is as nothing when compared with that which would be implied by the discoveries of the work of men's hands in the Pliocene and Miocene beds of England, France, Italy, and Portugal, which have been accepted by some geologists."

It will thus be seen that Sir John Evans gives only a qualified assent to the conclusions of experts like M. Desnoyers, who in 1863 claimed to have found in

¹ August 18th, 1897.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

the Pliocene sands of Saint Prest evidence of the existence of man in the Pliocene period; and the Abbé Bourgeois, who in 1867 believed that he found evidence of man's existence in the still earlier Miocene epoch in the flints discovered beneath the Miocene deposits of Thenay. Though hopeful that "evidence will eventually be forthcoming" which will give to man an earlier date than that now ascribed to him, Sir John Evans does not postulate a period earlier than the post-Pliocene or Quaternary period. This is, indeed, the general conclusion of even those geologists who are most ready to assume long periods of time in working out their theories. The conclusion they draw ought, however, to be received with caution; for the temptation to make hasty inferences is very great, and all exponents of natural science are more or less exposed to it. An illustration of the force of the temptation may be seen if the portrait that has been made of Quaternary man is examined. Taking the skull of a reindeer hunter, Professor Haeckel alleges that the hair once upon it "was black and woolly," while, according to Professor Joly, M. de Quatrefages believes he "has good reason for thinking it was red, and that the skin, instead of being black or brown, as the German author supposes, was very similar in colour to that of the present Mongol races. But how," as Professor Joly rightly asks, "is it possible, in the absence of the hair and the skin, to judge of the shade of complexion, so variable, moreover, in one and the same race?"¹

2. The conclusions as to man's *antiquity* and

¹ Vide *Man Before Metals*, by Professor N. Joly, pp. 353, 354.

THE ORIGIN

original condition which other experts in natural science have reached differ widely from those just quoted, and show the other side of the question. Thus Professor St. George Mivart, whose careful and elaborate researches in natural science give him the right to pronounce a judgment, says that in Pliocene times "we find even there but insufficient evidence of man's presence. It is true that a human skull and flint implements have been found at Olmo, near Arezzo, in Italy, by Professor Cocchi, in deposits deemed Pliocene, but the evidence as to the true position in which these objects were found is far from satisfactory, and the existence also of a fragment of pottery seems conclusively to point to a much later date, as does the form of the first implement itself, which is of the more refined and not of the ruder kind of make. We may, I think, say then that there is no good evidence for the existence of even Pliocene man."¹ Dealing with "the remains of pre-historic man, yet unacquainted with the use of metals," Professor Mivart maintains that "palæolithic man was thoroughly human," and he adds, "there is no evidence that he was ever or anywhere in a condition below that of savage man to-day, while there is abundant evidence that even then he was often far in advance of many of our existing wild tribes."²

Sir J. W. Dawson, an eminent geologist, remarks: "One of the first and most important facts with reference to the appearance of man is that he is a very recent animal, dating no further back in geologi-

¹ *Essays and Criticisms*, p. 174.

² *Ibid.* p. 175.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

cal time than the post-Glacial period, at the close of the Tertiary and the beginning of the modern era of geology. Further, inasmuch as the oldest known remains of man occur along with those of animals which still exist, and the majority of which are probably not of older date, there is but slender probability that any much older human remains will ever be found.”¹ And, again, he says: “The only rational hypothesis of human origin in the present state of our knowledge of this subject is, that man must have been produced under some circumstances in which animal food was not necessary to him, in which he was exempt from the attacks of the more formidable animals, and in less need of protection from the inclemency of the weather than is the case with modern apes; and that his life as a hunter and warrior began after he had by his knowledge and skill secured to himself the means of subduing nature by force and cunning. This implies that man was from the first a rational being, capable of understanding nature, and it accords much more nearly with the old story of Eden than with any modern theories of evolution.”²

Sir Henry Maine, one of the greatest publicists of the day, gives it as his deliberate judgment that “the effect of the evidence derived from comparative jurisprudence is to establish that view of the primeval condition of the human race which is known as the Patriarchal theory”;³ and after an elaborate review of evidence he reaches the conclusion “that all ancient societies regarded themselves as having

¹ *The Story of the Earth and Man*, p. 356.

² *Ibid.* 368.

³ *Ancient Law*, p. 122.

THE ORIGIN

proceeded from one original stock.”¹ Sir J. W. Dawson’s testimony, based on scientific evidence, is to the same effect; for he holds that man “as the sole species of his genus, and of his family or order, is separated by a great gap from all animals nearest to him.”² Canon Rawlinson, a competent judge on ethnic affinities, says: “The primeval savage is a familiar idea; and the so-called ‘science’ of the day is never tired of presenting before us the primitive race of man as only a little removed from the brutes, devoid of knowledge, devoid of art, a creature in few respects elevated above, and in many respects below, the anthropoid apes, from whom it is held he derived his descent by way of evolution.” But the question, he adds, is “really quite an open one; it is one on which natural science is quite incompetent to pronounce a judgment,”³ and on which historical research has not decided in either way.”⁴ “Historic facts show that either of two movements is possible. Man can and does often, perhaps most usually, pass from the savage into the civilized condition. We have numerous instances of this transition, which we can follow step by step, and put, as it were, under a metaphysical microscope.” But, on the other hand, “Comparative Philology does present to us cases

¹ *Ancient Law*, p. 128.

² *Modern Science in Bible Lands*, p. 242.

³ “The question of man’s origin is a philosophic, not a scientific question. Men may be very distinguished for scientific knowledge, and yet be the victims of a very defective philosophy.”—St. George Mivart’s “A Limit to Evolution,” in *Essays and Criticisms*, p. 314.

⁴ *The Origin of Nations*, p. 2.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

where there is reason to presume an original participation in a high civilization.”¹ The Weddas of Ceylon furnish an instance. “The best comparative philologists pronounce the language of the Weddas to be a debased descendant of the most elaborate and earliest known form of Aryan speech—the Sanskrit; and the Weddas are on this ground believed to be degenerate descendants of the Sanskritic Aryans who conquered India.”² “So far,” concludes Canon Rawlinson, “as the voice of history speaks at all, it is in favour of a primitive race of men, not indeed equipped with all the arts and appliances of modern civilization, but substantially civilized, possessing language, thought, intelligence, conscious of a Divine Being, quick to form the conception of tools, and to frame them as it needed them, early developing many of the useful and elegant arts, and only sinking by degrees, and under peculiar circumstances, into the savage condition.”³

“A glaring hiatus,” observes Professor Mivart, “exists between man in the lowest and most degraded condition in which ethnography reveals him to us, and the pure and simple animal. That this hiatus now exists, is not indeed denied, for it is so manifest it is incapable of denial. But it is contended that it did not always exist, though the argument that it did not do so is not supported by any actual observations, or by an appeal to experience, but reposes on its supposed necessity in order to make valid the theory of evolution in its entirety. But we cannot pay the price

¹ *The Origin of Nations*, p. 6.

² *Ibid.* p. 7.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 8, 9.

THE ORIGIN

of the sacrifice of facts for the sake of even the most seductive theory. Of the truth of that theory we may be *persuaded*, but of the existence of the hiatus we may be *certain*. If we must reject one, then must we rather reject the *persuasion* as to the former than the *certainly* as to the latter."¹

Professor Max Müller makes a statement which goes a long way towards supporting the conclusions of Canon Rawlinson, for he says a mistake is committed if it is assumed that the more savage a tribe, the more accurately it reflects the primitive state of mankind. "This was," he holds, "no doubt a very natural mistake before more careful researches had shown that the customs of savage races were often far more artificial and complicated than they appeared at first, and that there had been as much progression and retrogression in their historical development as in that of more civilized races. We know now," he adds, "that savage and primitive are very far indeed from meaning the same thing."²

The greatest difficulty which those who declare for evolution in its entirety experience is that presented by the appearance of man with his intellectual and moral judgments. However reluctant, many have been obliged to assume distinct interruptions in the evolutionary process. Professor Mivart admits that this difficulty stood in the way of his following Darwin and Huxley to the conclusions they reached; and Mr. Russel Wallace specifies three occasions when, in his judgment, there must have been interruptions

¹ *Essays and Criticisms*, p. 189.

² *Anthropological Religion*, p. 150.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

in the evolutionary process, namely, on the occasions of the introduction of life, of consciousness, and of man.¹ The crux of the whole question is, how to account for and explain the moral faculty on any theory of evolution. The possession of the moral faculty must always remain a difficulty to natural science, and at the same time be a powerful argument in favour of man's original state being one of civilization, for, as Mr. John Kidd rightly observes, "if any, indeed, could be called his natural state, it would be that of civilization," and that because "man being connected with a moral end, a moral end is hardly attainable in an uncivilized state."²

The judgments and conclusions of theologians as to man's original state may not to a number of people be of much value; for somehow the opinion widely prevails that theologians are more biassed than other professional men. The too dogmatic positions which they have often taken up may account for the adverse opinion; but it would be hard to prove that they are more dogmatic than other classes; for, indeed, it is the peculiar temptation of all professional men, scientists included, to be content with a limited outlook, and to be more or less prejudiced. Professor Tyndall claims for men of science that they have no prejudices, since they seek only truths;³ but the difference of opinion that prevails among them, and the heated controversy to which it gives rise, invalidate Pro-

¹ Vide *Darwinism*, pp. 464 *et seq.*

² Vide *Adaptation of the External Man to the Physical Condition*, p. 3.

³ Vide *Fragments of Science*, p. 167.

THE ORIGIN

fessor Tyndall's claim. Theologians, we admit, have not any more escaped the temptation than the interpreters of natural science. But notwithstanding this objection, we quote two competent authorities whose learning entitles them to pronounce an opinion. We take first Dr. Pusey, who, in his notes to a sermon delivered before the University of Oxford, says he had been asked "in the name of some young men who had heard this sermon, whether I account the animal derivation of the *body* of man to be a theory contradictory to Revelation, and should, on theological grounds, hold it to be impossible that science could establish it." To this question Dr. Pusey replied by submitting the scientific and "mythological or transformist" parts of Mr. Darwin's theory to a careful review, and concluded by saying: "It lies at the basis of our faith that man was created in the perfection of our nature, endowed with supernatural grace, with a full freedom of choice, such as man, until restored by Christ, has not had since." And, he added, "If science could prove that our race was born of an ape-mother, one should be forced to the belief that God took away all the propensities which it had by 'the law of inheritance,' and gave it a soul made in His own image."¹

The other authority which we quote is Dr. Orr, who, dealing with the problem of the *origin* and *nature* of sin, asks: "Must we not conclude, if regard is had to the evidence, that man did begin as a savage, but a few degrees removed from the brutes, and has only gradually worked his way upwards to his present

¹ *Un-Science, not Science, Adverse to Faith*, pp. 50-56.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

condition?" To this question he replies, "I would say, I certainly do not believe that this theory has been proved, and, expressing my own opinion, I do not think it is likely to be proved. If it were proved, I admit it would profoundly modify our whole conception of the Christian system. Negatively, evolutionists have not proved that this was the original state of man. The missing link between man and brute has long been sought for, but as yet has been sought in vain. The oldest specimens of men known to science are just as truly men as any of their successors."¹

IV

We have stated with considerable fulness the views entertained and the judgments pronounced by authorities on the one side and the other, of our subject. We have done this at length, because there is always more or less of dissatisfaction when an attempt is made to explain human society, without including all that is known regarding man's origin and original state. There is on the part of many thoughtful men at the present time a perfect passion for "the key of life." Weary in spirit and yet conscious of the deep and profound potentialities of human life, they demand not unreasonably that everything which science has to tell, and reflection to suggest, should be brought to bear upon the question of man's origin, and the growth of social relationships. From what has been stated it will be seen that a large and

¹ *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 213.

THE ORIGIN

important section of scientific men affirms that man is a distinct creation, and that he was manifestly introduced under favourable conditions, although his first appearance cannot be absolutely fixed. It is affirmed further that while science has nothing to say respecting moral questions, historical research, comparative jurisprudence, and ethnology agree with the facts on which Christianity rests.¹ It must, however, be admitted that though the results which have been reached are valuable, the information which we possess is too limited to allow a theory of human society to be framed on the basis of these results; and next, that in the search after what is true in nature, the exponents of natural science must have leave to make whatever hypotheses their materials seem to justify, even though these should appear to clash with our most cherished beliefs. There is still much that science has to discover and verify. "If ever," says Mr. Walter Bagehot, "we are to have a distinct conception" of the common ancestor, "it can only be after long years of future researches, scarcely the beginning of which now exists."² Since, then, there is so much to accomplish postulates are a necessity.

To the unscientific mind, it is true, the hypotheses adopted may seem startling and very unreasonable; but manifestly scientific investigators cannot, on these grounds, be prevented from making whatever postulates they deem necessary; for it is literally the case, as the author of *The Story of Creation* observes, "the

¹ Vide Sir J. W. Dawson's *Modern Science in Bible Lands*, pp. 241-251.

² Vide *Physics and Politics*, p. 112.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

guesses of old time made possible the certainties of to-day ; the scattered hints of one generation became the clue to the grand discoveries of its successors ; and the facts which, all unwitting of their import, the collector gathers, have their significance made clear by the philosopher." ¹ Much harm, it must be allowed, may be done if hypotheses are put forward and accepted as facts. Impatience is always a barrier to progress. Fuller research may substantiate the hypotheses that have been made, but until they are verified nothing but injury is done if they be made to serve as final statements of truths. It is, moreover, in the interests of science itself to guard carefully against the misuse of the necessary implements of research ; for science seeks the truth, and can afford to be patient. With these reservations it is open to the scientific worker to enter any and every field of research. If he investigates the question of man's antiquity, he is free to make whatever supposition he pleases, if thereby he hopes to elucidate his subject ; but at the same time he must be on his guard lest he lend the authority of his name to what may be unverified anticipations, and nothing more.

Such a possibility recalls the warning sounded long ago by Professor Ferguson, who enjoyed the distinction of belonging to that distinguished and select literary circle of which Sir Walter Scott was the chief ornament.² In his epoch-making work, *The History of Civil Society*, Ferguson shrewdly remarks that ever since men set themselves to understand social life,

¹ Edward Clodd in *English Illustrated Magazine*, July 1897.

² Vide Lockhart's, *Life of Sir Walter Scott*.

THE ORIGIN

they have spoken of the human race as having an origin which may be represented by either *iron* or *gold*; and he continues, in "framing our account of what man was in some imaginary state of nature, we overlook what he has always appeared within the reach of our own observation, and in the records of history." ¹ This warning, needless to say, has not been always heeded. So far from that, theorists, notwithstanding the gentle protests of men of science like Mr. Russel Wallace, Professor Mivart, and Sir J. W. Dawson, have proceeded to build up the social fabric, not upon ascertained historical facts, but often upon mere hypotheses.

V

If we take the maximum of assumptions that have been made in the name of science respecting man's antiquity and original condition, it must even then be acknowledged that the light which is thrown upon the original constitution of society is very dim and indistinct. Mr. Walter Bagehot, who has done so much to popularize many literary and economic subjects, has, in his *Physics and Politics*, stated these assumptions with great clearness. He begins, however, with what might be regarded as a rather damaging admission considering the object he has in view; for he says, "All theories as to primitive man must be very uncertain"; but this admission does not prevent him from going on to state that prehistoric men "had strong passions and weak reason;

¹ *An Essay on The History of Civil Society*, by Adam Ferguson, p. 3.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

that, like savages, they preferred short spasms and greedy pleasure to mild and equable enjoyment; that, like savages, they could not postpone the present to the future; that, like savages, their ingrained sense of morality was, to say the least of it, rudimentary and defective. But that, unlike present savages, they had not complex customs, and singular customs, odd and seemingly inexplicable rules guiding all human life.”¹

But how, we cannot help asking, could Mr. Bagehot ascertain these things? In stating them, had he any better or stronger evidence at hand than Professor Haeckel had, when he affirmed that the skull of the old man of Cro-Magnon was originally covered with black and woolly hair? Mr. Bagehot, however, seems to have experienced no difficulty in making these statements, for he proceeds with an air of absolute certainty and says, “Pre-historic men had not attainments. They never would have lost them if they had.” This he states, although he affirms immediately after, that “innumerable savages have lost, all but completely, many of the moral rules most conducive to tribal life.”² That is to say, savages of the present day, who are presumably in a more advanced state than pre-historic men, lose attainments which, it is said, pre-historic men could not have lost if ever they had attained them. It would, we think, be somewhat difficult to build society upon reasoning such as this, and at the same time entertain the hope that it would contain elements of stability. Mr. Bagehot, it must also be remembered, declares strongly for evolu-

¹ *Physics and Politics*, p. 113.

² *Ibid.* p. 115.

THE ORIGIN

tion in its entirety; he does not question its claims, but accepts them wholly. Evolution, however, so far as it refers to social life, must present more feasible arguments than those which Mr. Bagehot urges, if it is to be generally accepted. But our author proceeds still further, and maintains that the life of pre-historic man was not like that of the modern savage, "twisted into a thousand curious habits; his reason darkened by a thousand strange prejudices; his feelings frightened by a thousand cruel superstitions."¹ How could he know these things? On what authority are these affirmations made? That these are mere assumptions and nothing else, is demonstrated when it is seen how readily Mr. Bagehot gives away the position for which he has contended at length; for, in giving a further description of pre-historic men, he attributes to them the features, and only the features, which savages of the present day exhibit. "There was," he says, "a time, probably an immense period as we reckon time in history, when pre-historic men lived much as savages live now, without any important aids and helps, and that the first pre-historic men had flint tools, which the lowest savages use; and, further, that the moral side of pre-historic men was one of much licence," since "in that age descent was reckoned through the female only, just as it is among the lowest savages."²

These statements are made without hesitation. Intended as a basis on which further investigations as to the formation of human society can be carried on, they ought to have been verified, or at least

¹ *Physics and Politics*, p. 120.

² *Ibid.* pp. 121, 122.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

some good reasons ought to have been urged in support of them. The first, however, is only a surmise, though it is put forth as if it were an absolute truth; and the second is, on Mr. Bagehot's own showing, entirely without proof; for he adds, immediately after making it, "Of course no remains exist which prove this or anything else about the morality of pre-historic men." The only justification urged is that "one of the axioms of pre-historic investigation binds us to accept this as the morality of pre-historic races, if we receive that axiom." That is, hypotheses are made to serve the same purpose as well-established facts, a thoroughly unscientific method of procedure. If investigations are to be conducted with the hope of rendering aid to the better understanding of the origin of society, each step in the process must at least have some good reason that can be offered in support of the advance; but in this instance, there is none. On the contrary, the whole reasoning here reviewed rests upon what man is historically known to be, and not upon knowledge of pre-historic men, definitely ascertained by scientific research. The picture, indeed, that is drawn of man in pre-historic times is almost the same as one would produce who described the most savage tribes of Central Africa to-day; and, therefore, the assumptions made, do nothing to throw light upon the origin of society.

Without these assumptions, which have really so little to support them, we may, with Mr. Bagehot, hold that the course of the development of some tribes included no more than the enforcement of cer-

THE ORIGIN

tain "lucky rites," and that, given this starting-point, customs and usages became so deeply rooted in the lives of these tribes that they soon came to be attributed to some divine authorities, and could not be violated with impunity by even the most powerful chiefs. The acknowledgment of a supernatural power may thus, among certain tribes, have arisen, and a form of religion may thus have obtained. And, in the rudimentary state of society, from the armed conflict of one tribe with another in the same social condition, this issue is conceivable: the survival of the strongest, and the gradual assumption by the conquered of the habits and customs of their conquerors. We can also understand how further developments implied the existence of priestly and warrior castes, the latter protecting the former, which in turn promised certain religious benefits to their protectors. We can likewise perceive how it has become historically true that caste at first secures certain advantages, but ultimately stereotypes a people, rendering progress almost impossible, while non-caste nations are most progressive and the greatest benefactors of the race. We can, in addition, endorse all that Mr. Bagehot states when he says that the discussion of the obligatory elements in long-standing customs tends to break down artificial barriers, and makes for toleration, liberty, and progress.

VI

To make these acknowledgments is not, however, tantamount to holding that the human race has al-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

ways and invariably developed from these *origines* and in this manner; for philology finds among some tribes reminiscences of a previous high state of civilization from which it is manifest they have gradually lapsed; and when investigations are conducted through the Indo-Germanic tongues back to the oldest forms, we find in these forms evidence of a still more ancient and highly civilized society. Ethnology, too, tells of great nations having been subjected to a slow process of decay which has ultimately issued in deep degradation; and if authentic historical investigations be taken into account, these most frequently declare the original condition of man to have been one of comparatively high civilization. Besides, the traditions of the great empires of the world invariably point to a golden age lying in the distant past. There is, therefore, much, even on scientific grounds, in favour of the presumption that man's original state was not mere savagery, but that he was endowed with mental and moral powers which fitted him for fellowship and society.

The last word has not been spoken on this much-disputed question. Many exponents of natural science do not hesitate to assign to man an age that is unthinkable, and to trace his descent through the brute creation, ascribing moral sense to social instincts which, as Mr. Darwin says, "no doubt were primarily gained, as in the case of the lower animals, through natural selection";¹ while others agree with the opinions and endorse the findings of Professor Mivart, who is "profoundly convinced that the more deeply

¹ Vide *The Descent of Man*, vol. ii. p. 394.

THE ORIGIN

and thoroughly human nature is studied the more clear and decisive will be the conviction arrived at, that the powers of mental abstraction, and of language, which is its external sign, mark the most interesting and impassable *limits of evolution*." ¹ We cannot, with this diversity of opinion before us, resist the inference that the contribution which natural science makes towards the better understanding of the origin of society, does not warrant us in concluding that definite and incontrovertible results have yet been attained. So far from that, it is abundantly manifest that scientific investigations must overtake much that has not hitherto been even attempted; and until hypotheses are verified we must be content to wait. The final object to be attained is truth; and what is proven to be true in theory and in fact must be accepted, though that should imply on the one side the sacrifice of cherished beliefs, and on the other, the surrender of the most fascinating speculations.

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 314.

II

The Origin of Society

THE TESTIMONY OF MENTAL SCIENCE

I

INVESTIGATIONS as to the origin of society, if they are to be attended with any measure of success, must have as their starting-point history and experience. To venture into pre-historic times necessitates the making of postulates which are as yet, notwithstanding all that has been accomplished, only probabilities, and nothing more. The pre-historic sphere is too dark. We can at best only grope our way. The absence of light renders mistakes almost inevitable; and if we begin with misconceptions in our premisses, the conclusions that are drawn must be entirely misleading. If, however, we limit ourselves to the testimony of history and that of experience, enough material lies to hand with which to trace successfully the beginning and subsequent development of society. Limiting investigations to these fields, the science which must first

THE ORIGIN

of all be enlisted is that of psychology;¹ for, if mental phenomena be rightly understood, and the subtle operations of the mental powers carefully followed, we are then in a position for noting some of the essential elements which enter into and make for society. Indeed, from whatever side the study of the origin of social life may be approached, or whatever inquiries may be conducted, there is abundant testimony to the value of the contribution which psychology renders. This, it must, however, be admitted, has not always been so fully recognised as it ought to have been; while too frequently, even when psychological data have been considered, they have simply been assumed without anything like an attempt at adequate analysis. "We have been," says Mr. Selby-Bigge, "so much engrossed with tracing the historical evolution of institutions from the primitive to the civilized, that we have been rather neglectful of their interpretation, the key to which, even more conspicuously in the theory of practice than in the theory of knowledge, lies in psychological analysis."²

Attention has been called to the importance of psychological analysis by writers who have recognised its value, and an effort has, within recent years, been made to study psychology on entirely new lines.

¹ It should be clearly understood that we deal with psychology only in so far as it bears on society. We do not attempt to treat the science exhaustively, but only so far as it throws light on the origin and development of social relationships. We aim at broad generalizations from ascertained psychological data.

² Vide *British Moralists*, vol. i. p. 70.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Following the suggestion first made by Fechaer, and first put to the test of actual experiment by Wundt, psychologists have constructed psychological laboratories in which an attempt is made to measure and estimate mental phenomena. The mental domains indicated by the terms *feeling*, pleasure and pain; *knowing*, intellection; and *willing*, conation, have accordingly been carefully investigated by means of experiments and systematised observations. Under the categories of time, energy, and space, it is claimed, a quantitative knowledge of the relationship of certain mental phenomena has been ascertained; and it is further held, that as psychometry has succeeded in measuring mental facts, such as sensations of sound, sight, and pressure, mental phenomena have been submitted to the tests which the exact sciences apply, and the way prepared for psychogenesis.¹

The work that has been thus attempted has a special value for experts in natural science. It is also possible that the new psychology may throw light upon metaphysical questions, and ultimately aid the science of human society; but having regard to the results obtained, there is only too good reason for concluding that mental phenomena are too complex, too subtle, too illusive, to be accurately tabulated. Certainly, the results of the work done in the psychological laboratories are as yet too indefinite to be of much practical value.² But though

¹ Vide *The New Psychology*, by Dr. Scripture, for an interesting account of the recent work that has been accomplished.

² Dr. Hugo Münsterberg has recently criticised adversely Dr. Scripture's conclusions. The elaborate machines in the labora-

THE ORIGIN

we cannot commit ourselves to the conclusions of the new psychology, we are not precluded from making an analysis of mental phenomena. The content of consciousness can be carefully examined, and important deductions can be drawn.

In making an analysis of mental phenomena, care, however, must be taken as to the classification of these phenomena; for while it is true, as Sir William Hamilton has pointed out, that "it is only by a scientific abstraction that we are able to analyse" the mental state "into elements which are never really existent but in mutual combination,"¹ psychologists have made different classifications, and these again have largely determined their view of life. If prominence, for instance, is given to *feeling*, results will be obtained that are quite different from those that are reached when *thought* or reason is emphasized. Many philosophic works are greatly marred by the undue importance attached to feeling. Mr. Herbert Spencer makes feeling the centre of his system. His analysis of the "Composition of Mind" has for its conclusion that "the primary division of mental elements is into Feelings, and the Relation between Feelings, commonly called Cognitions."² M. Comte's system, again, as Dr. Mellone has clearly shown,³ is greatly impaired by the arbitrary retories do not, he says, measure mental processes, but only "the physical processes into which we project our sensations." They tell us nothing of mind *per se*. (Vide *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1898.)

¹ Vide *Lectures on Metaphysics*, vol. i. p. 189.

² *Principles of Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 521.

³ Vide *International Journal of Ethics*, October 1897.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

strictions he has placed on reason, and the undue prominence he has given to feeling. It is not difficult to perceive how these two authorities should have fallen into this error; for the attainment of their ultimate social ideal necessitates the subordination of everything to satisfy feelings, avoiding the disagreeable and seeking the pleasurable. Speaking generally—for there are exceptions to every rule—it may be said that psychologists who lay stress upon feeling run off into utilitarianism; those who give prominence to reason adopt intuitionism; and those who lay stress upon will, idealism. Here, as elsewhere, the premisses govern the conclusion, and here especially psychology exercises a powerful influence on ethics, and through ethics on society.

II

But it holds equally good that social conceptions largely determine our conceptions of mental phenomena. In the most direct manner the ideas that are entertained as to the nature and purpose of society tell upon psychological analysis, and make two things imperative: *first*, that we should have such an ideal of life as would do justice to the whole domain of our nature, for unless this be done, an imperfect and inadequate interpretation and analysis of psychology will be offered; and *second*, that psychology, ethics, economics, politics, and religion, should be recognised as standing closely related to each other.

How conceptions of the nature and purpose of

THE ORIGIN

society tell upon psychology may be seen if we examine some of the common conceptions that have been, or are at the present time, entertained. If, for instance, the maximum of pleasure is conceived to be the end of life, taking pleasure or agreeable feelings in the sense in which hedonists employ these terms, then our psychology will be more associational than anything else, and from it will be naturally and logically developed an ethical system which, in the first place, makes seeking pleasure and avoiding pain one of the main objects of life; and, in the second place, issues in a hard and fast theory of rewards and punishments. There is no hedonist who does not attach great importance to association of ideas, and in working out his theory of life is not obliged to reach the conclusion that has just been indicated. But if, on the other hand, the end of life is conceived to be that which requires us so to live, that the highest interests of self will only be attained when we seek interests wider than our own, then on examination it will be found that we have adopted a psychology which penetrates deeper than "trains of thought" and "association of ideas";¹ it will, indeed, be discovered by the aid of what Mr. Stout calls "noetic synthesis,"² that

¹ American writers, following German authorities, have introduced a new terminology in discussing psychological phenomena. This accounts for some of the confusion that prevails. There seems, however, to be good reason for speaking of *apperception* as that which stands opposed to associationalism, apperception being "the nomad that has consciousness of itself."

² Vide *Analytic Psychology*, by Mr. G. T. Stout, vol. ii. p. 3,

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

the mind is able to grasp central ideas and purposes, and give effect to them in the highest kind of actions.

If, again, we select another illustration, the same principle is seen in operation. If, for instance, society is conceived to be the result of a social contract, entered into deliberately and consciously, the only way by which this conception of society can be maintained is by falling back upon the psychological hedonism, dear to the older school of hedonists. But this theory has long since broken down, and that both because it is opposed to experience, and because there is that in man's nature which obliges him to be social. Anthropological psychology knows nothing of even savage tribes entering into groups by social contract, while the universal testimony of all who have tried to understand social life is, that man could not, even if he tried it, live separately without doing injustice to, and suppressing much that is truest in, his nature. The anchorite may retire to his cave, but in his lonely home, so far from developing his mental and moral powers, his very seclusion stunts their growth.

The advocates of psychological hedonism have, however, changed their ground. They have given up the theory of social contract, and have adopted the

where he says that when thought or action "is determined by the central idea of the whole topic, noetic synthesis is operative." Again, he remarks that noetic synthesis owes its "peculiarity to the introduction of a distinct kind of mental factor, the apprehension of the whole which determines the order and connection of the apprehension of the parts" (p. 41).

THE ORIGIN

theory that society is an organism; but if we follow them in their departure, and examine the grounds of this theory, it will also be seen that their conception of society has had a most distinct reflex influence upon their psychology. Society, they say, is an organism; and, arguing from biological analogy, they attribute social life to natural causation. It is a great advantage, which ought to be frankly acknowledged, that hedonists have exhibited their theory of society in a clear and logical manner. There is, indeed, a remarkable logical consistency in a theory which begins with natural causation and proceeds, with the aid of biological analogy, to pronounce final judgment on the nature and purpose of social relationships. If the premisses which hedonists thus assume be allowed, their reasoning cannot certainly be charged with having a single *hiatus* in it. The end they have in view, too, is quite manifest, and each step taken to reach it is marked by a captivating precision. Their theory of society as an organism has likewise about it much that is very attractive. The conception can be seen standing out quite distinctly; and when it is supported by the fascinating science of biology, it cannot be a matter of surprise that many have hailed the theory as that which puts into their hands "the key of life."

It is not, however, too much to say that here, as in the instances already examined, the conception of society that has been formed has deeply affected the psychological postulates. Biology, it must be admitted, is one of the most useful of the sciences. It has rendered great service, and has given a wonderful

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

insight into nature. But is it an adequate and true representation to hold that society is an organism? or do the features which belong to all organisms fully explain our present social life? Biology, as such, knows nothing of ethics or ethical judgments, unless, as we shall shortly see, in the sense in which Mr. Spencer and Professor Huxley explain the origin and growth of moral distinctions; but society rests upon ethical foundations, and men everywhere recognise the obligations of the moral law, whether they obey it or not, and that because there is deeply rooted in human nature the intuitive conviction of right and wrong. We are aware that in making this latter statement, objection may be taken to it, and that we are anticipating what must be substantiated in a succeeding chapter; but even now it is permissible to say that, however the moral faculties may be explained, moral distinctions cannot be traced back to biological roots, and that the existence of moral law necessitates an explanation of society which natural causation cannot supply.

But since biological conceptions have deeply affected the interpretation and analysis of psychology, it is necessary to examine a little further the organism theory. It may be urged against the conception of society as an organism *first* that there is within it no room for free will, since organisms are automatic, and each part mechanically falls into its own place; *second* that there is nothing in human society corresponding to the nervous system of animals; *third* that whereas an isolated individual may subsist and live out his life, a part of an organism cannot exist

THE ORIGIN

apart from the body to which it belongs; and *fourth* that, whereas an organism attains to perfection, man is ever conscious of attainments being within his power higher than anything which he has yet reached. "Man never is, but always to be blessed." Not, however, to press these arguments, we quote rather the objection which Mr. Ellis McTaggart has stated. "Self-conscious persons, such as make up society," he says, "are far more individual than a hand or a foot." This individuality, he argues, following the teachings of Hegel, requires a larger meaning to be attached to society than that which organism gives. "Self-conscious persons will need a deeper and more fundamental principle of union than suffices for the parts of a body; and if they *are* joined by a principle adequate for the purpose, will form a unity far closer than that of the parts of a body. And, he adds, "to call such a principle organic seems unreasonable."¹

The truth is that the organic conception of society has been adopted by those who read biology into their psychology, and treat mental phenomena as they handle phenomena of the animal kingdom. They see nothing in mind which cannot be traced back to physical causes. Mental and moral powers are, in their judgment, only the latest development of

¹ Vide "The Conception of Society as an Organism" (*Journal of Ethics*, July, 1897). Mr. Fiske, who follows Mr. Spencer on most questions, dissents from the latter's organic conception of society, and says:—"It would be a grave error to infer that a community is nothing more than a kind of organism. . . . In a community the psychical life is all in the parts, while in an organism the psychical life is all in the whole." (*Cosmic Philosophy*, vol. ii, pp. 226, 227.)

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

material elements. We do not say that many advantages may not be gained, if in dealing with sociological questions the organic conception of society be employed. Great care must, however, be taken not to press it too far, for it is not so much a radically false as an inadequate conception. There are mental and moral factors to which it cannot do justice. On the other hand, if, as we shall show, there is reason for holding that society is only a means to an end; that it supplies the conditions for the development of righteousness and love; and that through it righteousness and love, the highest moral qualities, are developed, then, psychological analysis may be conducted on a broader basis, with the promise of more satisfactory results.

Sufficient evidence has been adduced to show that sociological conceptions have a close and direct bearing upon our interpretation of mental phenomena; and since this has been established, the necessity for entertaining a high ideal of life becomes apparent. Waive for the moment the question how man comes to possess his mental and moral powers: there is no doubt that he is conscious of being the possessor of great mental and moral gifts, and all experience goes to prove that these are developed in the proportion in which high ideals are set up. If we are content with narrow and limited aims, we do not recognise any obligation spurring us on to self-sacrificing efforts; but if we are convinced that our present achievements are only the earnest of what may be attained, then it naturally follows that all our studies will be conducted with a view to throw additional light on

THE ORIGIN

the problem of life, and to show how the perfect life may be lived; that labour of the hands will be performed from the ennobling motive of multiplying real wealth; and that whether the work attempted be mental or manual, it will be undertaken with the object of benefiting our fellows.

III

But in conducting a thorough examination of a psychological interpretation of society two questions arise at this stage and demand an answer. *First*, how is it that men have come to possess the highest ideal of society? And, *second*, can we trace the steps and stages in the process of mental development that has been going on synchronously with the ever constantly enlarging ideal, until the highest has been conceived? Without entering into an elaborate discussion, we answer the first of these questions by saying that the highest ideal of society is manifestly due to the teachings of Christianity. Christ lived the perfect life, and enunciated principles which apply to man in his social relationships. Obedience to these teachings guarantees a perfect social state. We know, of course, that objections will be taken to these statements by those who regard the teachings of Christ as too ideal and utopian; but it is a futile task to attempt to understand the end of human life, and the goal of society apart from what Christ has taught. We assume all the responsibility, the praise or blame, that comes from acknowledging His authority, and we say it deliberately, that unless there

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

had been first of all an objective revelation—teachings that come to us from without, but which also, when once stated, find an immediate response from our moral nature, the end of the personal life and that of society could not have been clearly perceived. Following, it may be very imperfectly, the directions which Christ has given, and striving to obey the commands and aiming at the ideal He has set up, men are gradually approaching the goal. A long time may be required before it is reached; but experience proves how true to life are Christ's words; and what has been accomplished is a distinct prophecy that much more will yet be attained. The kingdom of God must come, and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We answer the *second* question by saying that, while it is clear enough that the conceptions of society which are entertained react upon the mind, the mind's phenomena cannot be expressed in tabulated form. The development is like the growth of a tree. The process cannot be marked unerringly. The growth cannot be seen, though the difference in society at one period, when compared with another, is manifest enough. The recognition of this difference means much for psychological analysis; for as the social conditions of life are improved, and higher ideals become the objects of earnest endeavour, fuller light is thrown upon the problem of life and the moral order of the universe; greater freedom is also enjoyed, and life personal and social grows instinct with hope, the most powerful incentive to work and service. These things obtaining, mental phenomena

THE ORIGIN

become more and more distinct. Feeling, for instance, is more marked, volition more apparent, and thought clearer. With these aids, classification of mental phenomena is more easily accomplished, and the way prepared for a correct synthesis; and synthesis, it may be added, is the psychologist's final task; for, as Professor Titchener observes, when he has analysed consciousness, the psychologist "must put together the results of his analysis, must synthetise, and compare his reconstruction of mental experience with the experience as originally given." ¹

As already indicated, we have to take note of the necessity which urges us to regard psychology as standing in a direct relation to all the other sciences that deal with social life. The sciences of Ethics and Economics, Politics and Religion, are not independent, though they may be, as they often have been, treated separately. What Mr. Spencer says with respect to the relation of psychology to biology holds absolutely true in relation to the sciences just named, that there does not "exist objectively those clear separations which the needs of classification lead us to make subjectively." ² The one shades off into the other, and the characteristics of all give to society the qualities and features which belong to it. Society may, indeed, be regarded as the resultant of ethical and economic, political and religious conceptions; and its extreme complexity may be accounted for by the circumstance that all these elements enter into it. The science of economics, for instance, is closely related

¹ *An Outline of Psychology*, p. 14.

² *Principles of Psychology*, vol. i. p. 136.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

to that of ethics. The intimate relation that subsists between these two sciences has been observed and insisted upon by many authorities.¹ The sciences of politics and of religion, again, are largely determined by the ethical and economic ideas that are entertained.

We shall have occasion, when dealing with the Economic Basis of Society, to indicate at greater length what in our judgment is the actual relationship which the sciences of social life sustain toward each other;² but meantime we content ourselves by pointing out that, while our conceptions of life tell upon psychology, psychological postulates, on the other hand, play a most important part in determining our attitude to ethics and economics, to politics and religion. Whatever psychological data are assumed, they inevitably run into the other sciences of social life. Consciously or unconsciously they powerfully affect them; for those who see nothing in mental phenomena but what can be accounted for on the principle of natural causation are, in the ethical province, hedonistic, in the economic field individualistic, in the political sphere hesitating as to reforms, and in the religious world unwilling to recognise a Divine and gracious Purpose in human history. It would be comparatively easy to give proof of these statements; just as,

¹ *Vide* Professor Hadley's *Economics*, pp. 23 *et seq.*; Professor McKenzie's *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, chap. i. pp. 50-53; and a paper by the same author in the *International Journal of Ethics*, April 1893. Professor Marshall also treats the question in the *Economic Journal*, vol. iii., in a most exhaustive manner.

² *Vide* pp. 184 *et seq.*

THE ORIGIN

on the other hand, it would not be difficult to show that if one starts with the postulate that there are in the mind, as part of its constitution, moral intuitions and aspirations after a perfect life, one naturally recognises the dictates of moral law, is responsive to the appeals of brotherhood, and, therefore, constantly endeavours to enlist political as well as other agencies in trying to bring about a better state; while at the same time, and for the same reasons, one is induced to recognise the evidences of the Divine Purpose which has manifested itself in many historical movements, and is still being unfolded.

We do not, of course, say that one's psychology is a guarantee for a development along one or other of these lines, for many disturbing elements enter and give a bias to life. In no case, indeed, life being human, can a straight course be predicted; but, speaking broadly and generally, it may with good reason be said that psychological postulates go a long way to determine the ethical, economic, political and religious views that are held, and the course of the development of life. The history of philosophy teaches nothing definitely if it does not make this fairly plain.

IV

Having to a certain extent cleared our course by the observations made up to this point, we now proceed to consider what light history and science throw upon our subject. Accordingly, we address ourselves to the two following questions: *first*, What do historical

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

research and experience warrant or entitle us to conclude as to the principles and motives which have brought men into social relationships? *Second*, What have psychology and the theory of evolution to contribute towards the elucidation of these principles and motives?

In trying to give a satisfactory answer to these questions, it must not be assumed that the methods of investigation, with their results, which satisfied inquirers of past times, will satisfy an age like the present, that has a passion for historical and scientific research, that is enamoured of physical science and material things, that aims at tracing out the roots of society by means of theories in vogue at the present time, and that endeavours to read the record of the beginnings of society in the light of its final aims. It would be as unwise as unjust to pronounce adversely upon these outstanding characteristics of our age; for much good and no harm comes from trying to understand the "inwardness" of all phenomena. The records of physical science, for instance, are splendid testimonies to the ability and patience that have been brought to the investigation of the operations of natural laws. Material things are also necessary, though they are not the highest for which to live. Theories, too, that have contributed so much to the right understanding of the physical world may with advantage be applied tentatively to the moral and spiritual; but here the reservation must be added, that a mistake is made when they are pressed too rigidly; for the moral and physical, though analogous, are not identical. Further, the final aim

THE ORIGIN

of society is the question, a key to which many very earnestly seek, and that with the view of understanding society itself. English writers find the aim either in self-realization through society, or in the realization of pleasure through society. M. Fouillée, who represents many of the Continental thinkers, in his brilliant work, *Le Mouvement Positiviste et la Conception Sociologique du Monde*, maintains that life *per se*, and in all its social relationships, is rightly grasped when "a perfect synthesis of cosmic and psychic facts" is furnished; and he looks to the science of society to make such a synthesis.¹

For the sake of convenience, and also to make our observations clearer, we may separate the two questions that have just been proposed for consideration. We take, first, the testimony of history and experience. In view of what has been already stated in the opening chapter, it is not necessary to advert at length to man's original state. It is enough to say that whenever the light of history is thrown upon man, he is found, at the first and at every subsequent stage, even among the most [savage tribes, differentiated from the lower animals by his mental and moral faculties. His capacity for reflection, as Wundt remarks,² and his recognition of the right as

¹ M. Fouillée holds that, "*C'est la conscience de l'unité entre notre vrai moi, et la loi de l'univers qui constitue la base de la religion philosophique*"; and he adds, "*Celui-là est moral qui dit : Fais le bien, advienne que pourra ; celui-là est religieux qui dit : Le bien arrivera tôt ou tard pour tous, car la moralité, identique à la sociabilité infinie, loin d'être une illusion, est la vraie révélation de l'univers*" (p 344).

² Vide *Ethical Systems*, p. 153.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

distinguished from the wrong, mark him off from the brutes. The possession of common mental and moral powers is, therefore, that which accounts, in the first instance, for men being drawn into social relationships. In some, under favourable circumstances, these qualities are more developed than in others; for knowledge and morality are both progressively apprehended; but whatever the stage of their development the qualities are there and constitute the conditions and essential elements of society. Mental and moral affinities thus give to men a common life. But men have, likewise, common sympathies and desires. On their physical as well as on their mental and moral side they recognise their need for fellowship, and perceive the benefits of combination. "Men are born to society." Comradeship at once satisfies many personal wants, and is the bond that binds men together.

A serious mistake, however, would be committed if it were assumed that the deliberate pursuit of self-interest is the most powerful factor in social life; for putting aside all other considerations, and taking history and experience as our guide, the desire for fellowship is ministered to by other elements even more powerful. Adam Ferguson, to whom reference has been already made, in discussing the history of society, instances such additional elements as "mutual discoveries of generosity," and "joint trials of fortitude." The latter, he says, in the phraseology which Johnson made at one time so popular, and which Boswell constantly designates "elegant," "redouble the ardours of friendship, and kindle a flame in the

THE ORIGIN

human breast which the considerations of personal interest or safety cannot suppress."

The next motive to which Ferguson attaches importance in his account of society, is that of *parental affection*, which, he says, "instead of deserting adults, as among the brutes, becomes mixed with esteem and the memory of early effects." To this he adds, "acquaintance and habitude" which "nourish affection"; and lastly, he assigns a large place to hardships, for men, he remarks, are "commonly most attached where external conveniences are least frequent, and these most frequent where the tribute of allegiance is paid in blood. Affection," he adds, "operates with the greatest force where it meets with the greatest resistance."¹

Ferguson first of all specifies these motives, and then proceeds to illustrate them at great length. After an elaborate review of all that pertains to society, he endeavours to find an ethical basis for his theory of society. He seems, however, to have been chiefly concerned in taking out, and giving prominence to, the most obvious principles and motives which the history of the race makes manifest.

If, then, the factors which have been named, mental and moral qualities, satisfaction of desires, personal interests, mutual discoveries of generosity, etc., be taken into account, the testimony of history and experience as to the origin and development of social life is fairly enough exhibited.² But it needs to be

¹ *History of Civil Society*, pp. 27-31.

² Buckle traces the development of society to moral feelings and intellectual laws, but "the moral laws," he says, "have been

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

added, and kept well in view, that since society is the resultant of so many forces, the explanation of it which satisfied inquirers like Ferguson in his day, is far from giving satisfaction to students of the history of society at the present time. Indeed, greatly dissatisfied with the results of previous research, sociologists have recently made a systematic attempt to explain the origin and development of society with the aid of the results of psychological investigations, and by the application of the theory of evolution to social phenomena.

In reviewing what has been thus attempted, we preface our examination by saying that whatever attitude may be adopted with respect to the conclusions that have been drawn, it cannot, in any case, be one of indifference. Modern thought and belief have been profoundly affected by the results of recent investigations, and especially by the emphatic and confident statements that have been made by the exponents of physical science. No person who lives and thinks can put himself beyond the reach of the influence that is thus exerted, and it is foolish to attempt an escape. The conclusions may or may not be accepted, but whether they be received or not, it is impossible not to perceive the need for re-examining

steadily and invariably subordinate to the intellectual laws." Changes, he maintains, are due in any given state to "the amount of knowledge possessed by their ablest men," to the direction which that knowledge takes, that is to say, "the sort of subjects to which it refers"; and, above all, to "the extent to which knowledge is diffused, and the freedom with which it pervades all classes of society."—*History of Civilization in England*, vol. i. p. 224.

THE ORIGIN

old positions, and testing or correcting previous conclusions in the light of what has been inferred from recent studies of physical, mental, and social phenomena.

V

With these frank acknowledgments we have now, secondly, to consider the application of psychology and the theory of evolution to the facts of social life. Mr. Herbert Spencer, at once the representative and most distinguished exponent of the tenets of the new school of sociologists, has earned much praise, but for nothing has he more deserved it than for the clearness with which he states his position. He endeavours to account for society by making certain postulates, and by applying in the most thorough manner the theory of evolution to the social, as Mr. Darwin applied it to the physical world, and, with just a slight suspicion of hesitation, to the moral. In his *Descent of Man* Mr. Darwin has said that in the struggle for existence the principle of *natural selection* was manifestly in operation; and that the qualities which preserved the species were themselves preserved, because they are *useful*. Among these qualities *social instincts* hold a prominent place, and go a long way to explain social life.

With the results of Mr. Darwin's work before him, Mr. Spencer, who had already attached great importance to the theory of development, proceeded to show that the useful is the moral. His method of procedure has the capital advantage of being easily followed. All phenomena are traced back to natural causation ;

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

adaptation and heredity are the interpreting factors of social life. It needs, however, to be said that there is not a uniform agreement between Mr. Spencer and his own followers. The formation and preservation of society being that which they set themselves to explain, they are unanimous in holding that man, on his physical side, can be accounted for by the principle of evolution ; but as man is something more than an animal, they postulate certain psychological data, and the postulates that are made, as we shall shortly see, reveal the difference of opinion that prevails among them.

Mr. Spencer finds a basis on which to build up society in the natural cravings for what is pleasurable on the part of primitive men who discovered by slow degrees the benefits gained by combination. But, in constructing his theory of society, Mr. Spencer at the very outset encountered old psychological problems, and was obliged to attempt an answer to the question, how hedonism, which is essentially egoistic, can become altruistic ; how regard for the well-being of others can become an active principle in conduct. From the first occasion when pleasure was set up as the standard of conduct until the present day this question has presented the greatest barrier to the adoption of hedonism. Writing quite recently, and with a full knowledge of all that Mr. Spencer has said, Professor McKenzie remarks that "the transition from the pleasure of the individual to that of mankind remains still a very obscure point in the Utilitarian theory."¹ "The pleasure of others," he says, "cannot

¹ *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, p. 26.

THE ORIGIN

be the good for us, if the good is pleasure."¹ Professor Woodbridge, noting the distinction, which all psychologists recognise, between *feeling* and the *object* which produces the feeling, or, as he terms them, "the psychological activity attended by a feeling of a certain quality," and "the concrete things which are the objects of human desire,"² thinks that if the non-moral and purely individual character of the former be kept in view, and the moral elements of the latter be attended to, "it is possible to set over against the pleasures of the individual those of society,"³ and that "pleasure of some sort is the *summum bonum*."⁴ The distinction insisted upon does not, however, help us to perceive the steps by which individual hedonism passes over into social or universal hedonism, which, Professor Woodbridge says, "claims that society *ought* to be regarded before the individual."

Mr. Spencer offers a definite explanation of the question under consideration. By the application of the principle of heredity he explains the origin of moral ideas. A long experience has issued in preference for what is useful; but the useful is the moral. Due to heredity, moral ideas are shared by all men. The development is racial, and, therefore, as it approximates a certain stage of perfection, common

¹ *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, p. 234. *Vide* also Professor McKenzie's *Manual of Ethics* for a statement as to the ambiguity attaching to the word *pleasure*, and some incisive remarks on psychological hedonism, pp. 94-97.

² *International Journal of Ethics*, July 1897, p. 475.

³ *Ibid.* p. 479.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 484.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

welfare becomes a motive to action. The race as such has approved certain useful qualities; they are designated moral, and heredity transmits them from one generation to the next. In this sense these ideas are innate, but only in this sense, and not as the Cambridge moralists, Cudworth and Price, or as the Scottish School, Reid and Dugald Stewart, taught; for they mistakenly attributed moral ideas to a Divine origin, and held they were in man's nature as created. The evolution of ethics, according to Mr. Spencer, precludes such postulates. He himself, however, is obliged to make certain assumptions, for, as Professor Wundt has pointed out, his theory proceeds upon the hypotheses that "the nerve-cells of the brain are the permanent representatives of ideas," and that the cells with their ideas are transmitted from generation to generation.¹ These are pretty large assumptions to make. Mr. Spencer, it ought to be added, justifies "altruistic activities" on other grounds, for we have not only innate moral ideas, but also "sympathetic sentiments, which are themselves the products of evolution," and these make for the production of "the greatest general happiness."²

We shall see in a little that the whole question of the origin and development of society, together with the aim and end of life, turns upon what psychological postulates are made; and that the further question must be answered, which psychological postulates are the more reasonable? But meantime

¹ *Vide Wundt, op. cit.* p. 156.

² *Vide Various Fragments*, p. 122.

THE ORIGIN

let us see how society is explained by Mr. Spencer. His favourite formula is "mutual aid," which suggested the idea of the formation of groups of individuals, and this again led to mutual benefits. The practical advantages derived from association being enjoyed, men naturally set a high value upon combination. The evolution of society, therefore, proceeded from stage to stage, each of which made and marked a distinct advance. The common good was secured by individuals either willingly submitting to certain restrictions, or being obliged by the majority to submit to limitations. Habits were thus formed, and these, prevailing on a large scale, ultimately constituted laws to which men rendered obedience either willingly or by constraint. At this early stage of our inquiries it may be parenthetically observed, that it cannot be other than a matter of surprise that Mr. Spencer should have declared so strongly for individualism as he has done in many of his writings, seeing his account of the origin and development of society includes the recognition of the benefits of mutual aid, and necessitates the submission of individual preferences to the common good.

But this apart, how did it happen that justice, which plays such an important part in preserving society, came to be recognised and have the authority which is now attached to its idea? The answer which thorough-going social evolutionists give to this question is quite simple; for what is termed *justice* is nothing other or higher than the relation of individual tendencies, and restrictions by general consent. The essence of justice, indeed, according to Professor

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Huxley and Mr. Spencer, is the harmony of this relation; and men, they say, have come by slow degrees to acknowledge the obligation which it enforces. As in the physical, so in what is called the moral sphere, everything can be explained by the theory of natural causation, so at least Mr. Spencer holds, though on this point, as we shall shortly have occasion to note, Professor Huxley broke away from Mr. Spencer; and his contention that an ethical process interrupts the cosmic led to a somewhat undignified controversy. Both, however, seem to agree that there is neither such a thing as abstract right nor an objective standard to which moral actions must conform.

In the slow evolution of life, says Professor Huxley, men adopted certain customs, but these customs had to submit their credentials to reflection, and reflection in turn gathered into ethical systems such customs as won its approval. "One of the oldest and most important elements in such systems is the conception of justice. Society is impossible unless those who are associated agree to observe certain rules of conduct one towards another; its stability depends on the steadiness with which they abide by that agreement; and so far as they waver, that mutual trust which is the bond of society is weakened and destroyed . . . This observance of a common understanding, with the consequent distribution of punishments and rewards, according to accepted rules, received the name of justice, while the contrary was called injustice. But with lapse of time the idea of justice underwent a gradual sublimation from

THE ORIGIN

punishments and rewards according to acts, to punishments and rewards according to desert; or, in other words, according to motive. Righteousness, that is action from right motive, not only became synonymous with justice, but the positive constituent of innocence, and the very heart of goodness."¹

Thus, according to Professor Huxley, the seat of moral authority is found ultimately in the dictates of cultured reflection, but he makes no attempt to show what gives to reflection the quality of culture. Surely it includes, among other things, capacity to discriminate between what is true and false, right and wrong, and that, again, presupposes the possession of an ethical faculty. Besides, to say that those who are associated together must agree to observe certain rules is to make a statement which is obvious enough, but is not to offer a satisfactory explanation either of the bonds that bind them together, or of the basis upon which obedience rests. Professor Huxley's theory of justice simply postulates a naturalistic root, the subsequent development of which into stem and flower and fruit, yields that which is known as ethical qualities. Being issues in well-being, metaphysics in ethics; and certain psychological data are assumed with the view of showing both how the process goes on, and how metaphysics and ethics are bridged.

VI

The position thus taken up affords a fine illustration of the principle that inferences largely depend upon

¹ *Evolution and Ethics*, The Romanes Lecture, pp. 10, 11.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

premisses ; and for this reason obviously the questions which must first be answered are : What psychological postulates are best supported by experience and reason ? As we examine the import of feeling, desire and volition, what data may be assumed as most consistent with our moral and intellectual judgments ? The answer returned to these questions decides our preference for intuitionism, hedonism, evolutionism, or for a synthesis of all ethical types which issues in evolutionary idealism. It would take us too far afield to discuss all the problems that are thus opened up ; but indeed an elaborate discussion is not necessary, for in the last resort, whatever psychological postulates may be made, the question which presents itself for consideration is, the tracing of moral distinctions back to spirit or to matter. Hedonism, whether of the older or more recent school, is one of the essential factors in evolution, and even evolutionary idealism is only the last form which evolution has assumed. The main question, therefore, lies between mind and matter.

If, then, with Dr. Newman Smyth and most writers on Christian Ethics, it is held that "human nature is constituted for moral life,"¹ and that conscience is "the voice of God speaking within the soul," the conclusions reached will be quite different from those that are drawn by writers who, consciously or unconsciously, return to the old Greek conception of human life as a part of nature, and who have, among other things, to account for man's capacity to reflect, abstract and generalize, a capacity which differen-

¹ *Christian Ethics*, p. 27.

THE ORIGIN

tiates man from the lower brute creation. Which of the two sets of postulates is the more reasonable? This is the definite question that must be answered; and the reply given marks the school to which each thinker belongs.

It is contended by evolutionists that if the theory of evolution is applied to the moral precepts on which society rests, difficulties will one by one vanish, and that chiefly because it is the scientific method of reaching right conclusions. The claim to employ scientific methods does not, however, really affect the issue, for the claim itself can scarcely be allowed, seeing that the region of investigation is one in which physical tests do not apply, notwithstanding all that physico-psychology has disclosed. Nor does it avail that the exponents of evolution are able to point to what is held to be a parallel process of evolution going on in the physical world; for when a representative writer, like Mr. Leslie Stephen, says that the moral law is simply "conformity to the conditions of social welfare," and that conscience is "the name of the intrinsic motive to such conformity,"¹ a statement only is made, but no light is thrown upon it by even the most careful observation of physical evolution. Indeed, whatever assistance future physical research may be able to render to investigations regarding the psychological and ethical bases of society, it has done little as yet to justify the claim that evolution removes difficulties, and gives a satisfactory explanation of the origin and development of society. The utmost that it has done is to suggest that the

¹ *The Science of Ethics*, p. 349.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

theory of evolution may be applied to mental and moral phenomena ; and that, of course, is a suggestion which cannot be dismissed off-hand, for light on life's problems ought to be welcomed from all quarters ; but, on the other hand, probabilities cannot be accepted as facts ; and taking all the information that has been hitherto gathered, whenever the results of the investigations of natural science are applied to social life, even on the acknowledgment of distinguished exponents of natural science like Mr. Russel Wallace, further postulates are necessary before social phenomena can be explained.

It is a remarkable circumstance, and one deserving special attention, that many of those who decide for evolutionary ethics, exhibit a positive dislike for moral terminology. In their opinion hedonism and utility are sufficient to account for ethical actions. They are obliged, it is true, to employ moral terms, but, rightly speaking, and according to their interpretation of society, it does not rest on an ethical basis ; it has at best only a psychological foundation, and that is enough. "The hedonists," says Dr. Martineau, "accordingly show a certain impatience of distinctly ethical language"; and taking Mr. Spencer as a representative, he observes that Mr. Spencer "construes '*obligation*' into the *indispensableness of using the means if we would get the end.*"¹ Mr. J. Llewelyn Davies still more emphatically remarks that "Mr. Spencer and other thinkers of his school persist in using common moral phraseology. In truth," he says, "they cannot help it ; no man

¹ *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii. p. 356.

THE ORIGIN

can hold converse with other men without using it." ¹

In trying to account for and explain the foundations of society, so far as ethical inquiries are concerned, no great harm would be done were it merely a question of words about which disputes are carried on. The controversy deals, however, with more serious issues, for thorough-going evolutionists not only insist that society is an organism subject to the laws of all organic growths, but they also in many instances refuse to take advantage of the contributions of religion, and even look with suspicion on those of philosophy unless in so far as it is hedonistic. In their judgment intuitive moral convictions go for nothing; they are not the outcome of moral endowments conferred on man, who is "constituted for moral life." Like reason itself, they are mere developments due to natural causation; and self is nothing more than "a mere phenomenon of the universe—a pulsation from the tide of reality breaking into consciousness." ² Religion is nothing more than the offspring of superstition, which men will abandon when they become more enlightened; it has done some good in the past, but better agencies would have been adopted had not fear created the religious spirit. Conscience is but a name, and not, as Socrates held, a Divine voice in the soul; and economics is simply hedonism reduced to a system.

It is not, and indeed cannot be, surprising that a theory of the foundations of social life which sets aside the conclusions of so many earnest thinkers

¹ *Order and Growth*, p. 97.

² Dr. Martineau, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 2

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

who have no other object in view than to discover truth, should have been received with a measure of hesitation. Applied to psychology its postulates are too stupendous to be readily accepted, and applied to morals its defects are more apparent than elsewhere. Hence its claims have been seriously disputed, and its conclusions questioned. Indeed objections based on philosophic as well as religious grounds have been urged against it; and many who were at first disposed to accept it have been ultimately obliged to refuse assent to its claims, not because they have been unwilling to follow wherever the search after truth has led them, but chiefly because its postulates have not been supported by evidence which might make them credible.

VIII

Lack of such evidence has not, however, created a difficulty for those who find in the psychological hypotheses of evolution a satisfactory explanation of the bonds that hold society together. Whatever difficulties others may experience, they have no hesitation in brushing aside the objections which opponents raise to their theory. But the task that they are obliged to undertake is not so easily discharged when they are called upon to answer questions urged by members of their own school; for, as we have already pointed out, they are far from agreeing among themselves as to what psychological data ought to be postulated. They have each a preference for a special datum, and frequently the data chosen are

THE ORIGIN

mutually exclusive. Mr. Spencer, as we have seen, lays emphasis upon "mutual aid"; but M. Tarde, in *La Sociologie Élémentaire* dissents from Mr. Spencer's postulate and maintains that the essential element in social evolution is "imitation." M. de Greef, in his *Introduction à la Sociologie*, again holds that society can only be accounted for on the theory of "contract and alliance"; while Professor Giddings, the latest exponent of evolution as applied to society, adopts a position midway between that of M. Tarde and M. de Greef, and contends as against the "mutual aid" theory of Mr. Spencer for "consciousness of kind," which, he says, is "more profound, more inclusive, more discriminating, more varied in its colouring, than any consciousness of kind that is found among the lower animals."¹

Given the premisses which these sociologists assume, the construction of society goes on apace; but manifestly, since they postulate different psychological data, they cannot all be correct in their assumptions. It is, therefore, a mild, albeit a just criticism to make when it is said that they must agree among themselves before they can hope either to gain credence for their respective explanations of the origin and development of society, or to supersede an interpretation which rests upon intuitive convictions, is supported by historical testimony, and satisfies reason and conscience.

It may, however, be too much to expect that those who set themselves to explain the formation of society by a series of psychological postulates, more or less

¹ *The Principles of Sociology*, p. 225.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

doubtful, can ever be quite unanimous. The only certain effect which is sure to follow is that by pressing their working formulæ to the exclusion of the moral and spiritual endowments of man as created, a reaction is sure to set in; and then the real danger to be apprehended will confront the sociologist, namely, that of losing sight of what of truth there is indubitably in social evolution. For, given a starting-point, take the well-attested facts of history, recognise that man is a moral and spiritual being, and that he shares with the animal creation a physical nature, and the evidences of a social evolution are numerous. Anthropology, jurisprudence and ethnology, so far as they proceed upon definite information, and not upon mere hypotheses which may or may not be verified, affirm that the family is the original unit of society. The family in process of time develops into the clan, the clan into the tribe, and the tribe into the nation, which is held together by the possession of a common territory. The stages in social development are thus quite manifest. It is, however, a mistake to attempt to mark off these stages, as M. Comte, and more recently Professor Giddings, have tried to do, the former by his famous "law of the three stages," and the latter by speaking of the military and theocratic, the liberal-legal and the economic and ethical stages of civilization. These stages cannot be differentiated so easily as is imagined, nor do they yield the synthesis which sociologists desiderate. The one is constantly found running into the other; and the economic, which is generally put last, is often found in the earliest stages,

THE ORIGIN

though, of course, in an imperfect form. A much more perfect synthesis of the elements in social evolution is obtained if we are simply content to watch with care the historical process of that evolution, for then we see how tribes and nations gradually recognised the benefits of social and political organizations, how liberty was most securely guaranteed by law, which ultimately rests on ethical foundations; how religion, with its altruistic feelings, brought to society an ethical force which makes for brotherhood, and subordinates the interests of the individual to those of society; and how economics, early receiving attention, obliged men to discuss those questions which Aristotle was the first to express in literary form,¹ such as the getting of wealth, how to use it, and the possibilities of life and social progress.

VIII

These factors are still operating upon and moulding society. Any attempt, therefore, to apply the scientific method with a view to interpret social life must include a careful examination of each of these elements. For analytical purposes this is necessary, since not otherwise can the complex system be understood; but it is even more required if an accurate synthesis is ultimately to be made. Philosophical analysis and synthesis do not, however, express our final aim, which is practical. They are attempted, but with the view that political, social, and religious

¹ Vide *Economics*, book i. chap. 9.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

duties may be rendered plainer; for, indeed, investigations and the results to which they lead, go for nothing unless they tell upon daily life. Within recent years many contributions have been made to the science of society; these have had the effect of calling attention to, and showing the importance of, social relationships; but in all instances the value of the contributions has been tested and tried by the amount of light they throw upon the practical obligations and privileges of social life. We may add that the application of this test to social utopias has set aside many an inviting abstract theory, and rightly too.

If, then, the constituent factors of society are to be properly understood, it is necessary that each of them in turn be submitted to a careful examination. We purpose accordingly to investigate the ethical and economic, the political and religious, foundations of society. We have it as our objects (*a*) to ascertain the character of each, and what each contributes to society; (*b*) to gain an insight into the social fabric, and the final aim of social relationships; and (*c*) to understand how, by the application to the right government of society of all that is true in ethics and economics, politics and religion, the lives of the vast masses which constitute society may be rendered brighter, better and happier. Our objects are not, therefore, speculative, but practical. Philosophic inquiries are conducted with a view to practical ends.

In conducting such an investigation as that which we have set before ourselves, much depends upon the

THE ORIGIN

conception of society which is entertained. It is necessary, therefore, to advert briefly to the different conceptions of society that are advocated. There is, *first*, the *mechanical*, according to which society is an external mechanism through which the welfare of individuals is promoted; *second*, the organic, which makes society an end unto itself; and *third*, the conception of society as a unity, which again is only a means to an end. The controversies of the day turn upon the two latter. The organic may be said to hold the field at the present time; for biology being perhaps the most popular of all the sciences, that is happening which has so often taken place in former times. All things are now explained in terms of biology, just as they used to be in terms of mathematics when that science ruled. But the organic is apt to lapse into, if indeed it be not identical with, the discarded monistic conception, for cells are largely determined by the whole body; and if society is an organism, it is hard to escape from monism. Again, the organic conception leaves little play for individuality which is at once the note of self-consciousness and the basis of responsibility. Mr. Muirhead rightly remarks that "the primary feature which distinguishes a conscious self from a merely sentient subject is that it asserts its 'personal identity' as the underlying unity of its transient experience. Even in its most elementary stages the world of such a self is a unity in a sense which it is not (apparently) to the lower animals. Hence the fundamental principle it brings with it to the interpretation of the signs supplied it from without is that they should form an

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

intelligible unity or whole.”¹ It is rather a notable circumstance that Professor Giddings, who has strongly declared for psychology² in his interpretation of the origin and development of society, substitutes organization for organism;³ and it is still more worthy of remark that M. Fouillée rejects in turn the mechanical and the biological conception, and adopts the sociological. The mechanical he rejects because it defeats itself, and the biological because it is inadequate. But these authorities apart, the organic conception seems to be too rigid. It does not afford a place for all social phenomena, and leaves many of them unexplained. No great harm would be done if it were said that society is *like* an organism, but the issues are quite different when it is maintained that society *is* an organism.

It is better, therefore, to adopt the conception of society as a unity without attempting to find in physical nature a perfect analogy. All analogies are notably imperfect, and when pushed too far, as the organic conception is in danger of being, hinder progress. But when we say society is a unity, we must be careful to indicate what is meant by the term. It is a unity which leaves abundant room for individual characteristics; for the truest unity is that which results from a reconciliation of differences. The greater the individuality the profounder the unity. For a time, for instance, in the social evolution individualism may govern economic, political and even religious questions; socialism, however, comes in, not

¹ *The Elements of Ethics*, p. 236.

² *Op. cit.* preface, p. v.

³ *Ibid.* p. 421.

THE ORIGIN

in and by itself as a final solution, but as that which corrects the one-sidedness of individualism, and is a main factor in producing a deeper unity. In this sense, then, we use the term; but we also, while regarding society as a whole, look upon it as a means to an end. It is that through which the individual life and the lives of our fellows are realized, developed, perfected: for human life is a discipline, and the profound potentialities of man's nature are even something more than a prophecy,—they amount to a certainty that the disciplined and perfected life will find fields for still higher service beyond. Life cannot be measured by what we see and handle; and the greatest intellects are often the most reverent, because they clearly perceive that philosophy as well as religion must take account of the continuity of life, and they learn to treat human relationships, with society as the expression of these, as means toward far-reaching ends.

The advantages of regarding society as a unity are quite conspicuous. For, just as the time has gone past when mental phenomena were assumed to imply different faculties, so the science of sociology is gradually making it manifest that ethics and economics, politics and religion, are only parts of a whole. The psychologist may, and indeed often is obliged to, treat different mental phenomena separately. Analysis requires it; and in the same way the sociologist is frequently obliged to consider the constituent elements of his science apart from each other. They cannot, however, be really separated. The one depends on the other too much to permit of that; and the more clearly this is perceived the greater is the progress made in the study

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

and settlement of perplexing social questions. In the past, ethics and economics, politics and religion, have been too much separated, and all kinds of hurtful results have followed, such as the theologian bidding away the politician from his province, and the economist maintaining that the theologian is incompetent to handle questions of price and value. But conclusions such as these, and others even more unwarranted, would not be drawn if it were perceived that all the elements in life are knit together, and cannot be separated with impunity. If, indeed, progress is to be made, this conception must prevail more widely than it has hitherto done, and the close relation of one science of life to another must be kept in view. Not otherwise is it possible to make that synthesis which it is the aim of all sociologists to accomplish; and not otherwise can the meaning and end of life be correctly interpreted.

In entering, therefore, upon a study of the ethical and economic, the political and religious foundations of society, we adopt the conception of unity. This permits both analysis and synthesis of social phenomena. Analysis and synthesis will, we venture to think, show that society as a unity is also a suitable means through which the highest ends can be attained; for, when all is said, it aids us greatly in understanding the supreme value of human existence, when we perceive that all social phenomena are closely related; that the solidarity attaching to human life implies both obligation and privilege, duties and rights; that these are the guarantees of progress, and the conditions under which social life is developed; and that a Divine

THE ORIGIN

Purpose runs through all things, the material being not an end unto itself, but only the handmaid of the moral and spiritual. The unity of society is a fine conception. On the one hand, it prevents us from attempting the solution of social problems by the application of abstract theories; and on the other, it is the key to the right interpretation of history. Rightly applied, it enables us to understand the life of the individual and that of society. It lifts life, personal and social, out of narrow grooves. It frees from the despair that is the result of dreary isolation, and delivers from the pessimism that is the outcome of irreconcilable conflicts; and both of these have done much to damp the ardour of workers once inspired by enthusiasm for the good of their fellows, and have prevented thousands who might have become the benefactors of the race from living the highest life.

III

The Ethical Basis of Society

I

SOCIETY rests upon an ethical foundation. The science of ethics, therefore, makes an important contribution to the science of society. If, indeed, what is true in ethics can be clearly apprehended, not only will one of the most powerful bonds that hold men together be seen, but insight into the content of social relationships will also be gained. In the endeavour to ascertain the character and nature of the ethical basis of society, it is necessary at the outset to observe that ethical conceptions are largely determined by the standard which is adopted in estimating conduct. Is, for instance, the standard that of a *law* which is imposed upon us from without, to which, however, our moral nature at once responds? or is it that of an *end* which we seek, and which in turn defines the standard to which actions must conform? or must the standard be inferred from the *motives* which impel us to definite acts of conduct? In point of time the idea of law comes first. For, whether applied to the individual

THE ETHICAL BASIS

or society, the first conception of morality is one of obedience to law.

When, however, an analysis of moral law is attempted, questions as to *end* and *motive* at once arise, and the answer which is returned to these goes a long way to decide our conceptions of the standard itself. Indeed, ethical systems turn upon these questions. Many attempts have been made to classify these systems, but perhaps the most exhaustive classifications are those which have been made by Professor Wundt. He classifies ethical systems as they are determined by motives and ends. The classification of motives includes, according to his arrangement, ethical intuitionism and ethical empiricism. The classification according to ends includes the ethical system which has its source in external commands, and that system which rests upon "original dispositions and the natural conditions of development."¹

The above classifications have much to recommend them. They are well supported by the facts of experience; and they offer a good *vidimus* of the results of historical inquiry. But the chief value which attaches to them and all other classifications that have been attempted is, that they enable us to perceive to what extent moral law takes cognizance of both motives and ends. As we have just seen, the conception of

¹ *Vide* Professor Wundt's *Ethical Systems*, pp. 161-165, where classification according to ends is further divided into (1) Eudæmonism under the form of (a) Individual Eudæmonism or Egoism, (b) Universal Eudæmonism or Utilitarianism; (2) Evolutionism under the form of (a) Individual Evolutionism, (b) Universal Evolutionism.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

law comes first in time, but it has authority and commends itself to reason because it pronounces upon motives, and has regard to the supreme end of life. Moral law cannot, indeed, be indifferent to the incentives to actions. On the contrary, it examines the character of motives, and decides for those which make for the highest good of mankind. Nor can it be indifferent to the ends after which men strive. Speaking at all times with authority, it gives its approval to those actions only which issue in well-being.

To attribute to moral law these qualities does not, however, exclude but rather necessitates, a careful inquiry into the theories which moralists have propounded. "As a rule," says Professor Wundt, "men agree on the question as to *what* is moral; opinions are divided only as to *why* it is so."¹ Division of opinion thus obtaining, we examine the different theories with the object of seeing how they account for the authority which belongs to moral law. Moralists are divided into four schools. (1) Those who hold by intuitionism either on intellectual or emotional grounds, and according to whom moral ideas are innate. (2) Those who accept utilitarianism as the standard of moral action and identify the useful with the good. Modern utilitarians declare more for eudæmonism than hedonism, for *happiness* rather than *pleasure*. (3) Those who maintain that evolutionary ethics alone gives a satisfactory explanation of moral judgments, and who attribute all things to natural causation. (4) Those who adopt idealism, and, holding that "the

¹ *Ethical Systems*, p. 161.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

world is a rational system, finding its ultimate explanation in mind,"¹ discover a solution of moral phenomena in "the theory of ultimate good as a perfection of the human spirit resting on the will to be perfect."²

The most satisfactory way by which we can ascertain how different ethical theories have come to hold a place in the interpretation of society, is to make a review of their historical rise and subsequent development. For the purposes we have in view this method of treating our subject is necessary. We aim at ascertaining what ethical theories have been held throughout the whole period of the growth of society. We require, therefore, a broad outlook, and an accurate estimate of ethico-social phenomena. Thoughtful men in all ages have studied the moral basis of society; and whatever may have been the theories entertained by them, they have been as interested as we can possibly be in trying to understand the complex relationships of human life. To ascertain their views and the grounds upon which they maintained them is far more helpful in making an effort to interpret the social life of to-day than the discussion of abstract ethical questions. This necessitates a wide historical survey, but having regard to our main purpose, any trouble that may be entailed will be abundantly repaid if society itself is thereby better understood. Here at least it holds good that history is a great instructor. Adopting, then, the historical method, we shall see at what periods ethical theories emerge, and also some-

¹ Vide *Manual of Ethics*, by Professor J. S. McKenzie, p. 23.

² Vide *Prolegomena to Ethics*, by Professor T. H. Green, p. 427.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

thing of the reasons which have been urged in support of them.

The history of ethics begins with the Greeks ; for, as Professor Erdmann points out, " we must not be induced to talk of pre-Hellenic philosophy, or, worse still, of pre-Hellenic *systems*, either by the rules of propriety or external decorum enunciated by the Chinese sages, or by the pantheistic and atheistic doctrines which the Indian spirit attains in the Mimansa, and in Kapila's teaching in the Sankhya, or by the intellectual exercises by which it rises in the Nyaja, or, finally, by the confused semi-religious and semi-physical doctrines of the ancient Persians and of Egypt." ¹ The Greek ear, he says, first caught the significance of *γνῶθι σεαυτόν* ; and in the East, except among the Jews, no attempt had been made to apprehend the nature of the human mind.

II

Ethics, before Socrates taught men to make the mind the object of their thoughts, is of an uncertain type. Physiologists like Thales, and at a later date like Heraclitus, or metaphysicians like the Pythagoreans and the Eleatics, had done no more than to clear the way for ethical investigations, and occasionally to utter a moral maxim. When, however, we come to the Sophists, Protagoras, Gorgias and Hippias, we meet a class of men noted for their culture and scepticism. Their distinctive work, indeed, seems to have been to undermine the religious beliefs and customs of the people of

¹ *History of Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 13.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

their time ; and, so far as their task could be said to have even the semblance of construction, to maintain that moral and social laws are nothing more and nothing higher than selfish enactments. But in this latter position we detect the beginnings, very indefinite and very uncertain, still the beginnings, of an ethical theory. It is a very poor type, yet it is a distinct gain to have any theory at all ; and certainly the Sophists had one in so far as they developed out of their doctrine of the subjectivity and variability of knowledge a corresponding doctrine in ethics, according to which an objective standard of moral actions is discarded, and self and self-interest are made the main rule of life. In this egoism we have the dawn of the reign of hedonism as an ethical system. The work of the Sophists could not, however, endure for any length of time. To rest in negation or to make egoism the chief business of life is alike impossible. Accordingly, though their criticisms and denials effected a good purpose, since they forced men *to think*, their lack of a moral foundation prevented them from rendering any permanent service.

But these cultured exponents of the baldest egoism appear to have given an impetus to Socrates' thoughts which has not received the attention that it deserves. He could not rest satisfied with their negations. The account which Xenophon and Plato give of his life make that plain enough. They indeed represent him as ever inquiring as to the *purpose* of things, and this imparts to his ethical conceptions a definite form. For Socrates, as for the Sophists, the individual is important. Unlike them, however, he lays emphasis not upon $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

ἄνθρωπος, every man, but upon *ὁ ἄνθρωπος*, the man, in whom that which is universal is realized. Finding thus a broader basis for his inquiries, he insists upon subordinating present pleasures to future benefits; upon *motive* as giving character to actions; and upon knowledge as the essence of virtue. The good is determined by a man's own insight. The Divine voice within, *dæmon*,¹ always agrees with the dictates of true knowledge; for knowledge is not merely and only the outcome of the study of the mind, but also the right regulation of and complete mastery over one's self. To Socrates both of these things were implied in the imperative, "Know thyself."

It is not difficult to perceive how the teachings of Socrates became the fruitful source of many ethical theories. Standing on the borderland of a new intellectual era, it was perhaps impossible for him to develop a perfect ethical system. He could not, indeed, escape contradicting himself on many occasions. Nor could he avoid seeming occasionally to agree with those whose views he strenuously opposed, as, for example, when he laid emphasis upon insight, and so approached the subjectivism of the Sophists, while at the same time he counselled obedience to the laws of the State. To single out these things is, however, only to acknowledge that though he was a very great man, he could not perform the task which could only be accomplished after long ages of earnest reflection on the part of many thinkers. But Socrates did enough to show that life is too profound to be expressed by mere egoism; and in teaching men to seek the good as opposed to

¹ *Republic*, book vi. 496.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

the useful by subordinating the pleasures of the present to the benefits of the future, he sounded the first notes of that altruism which at once imparts light and health to society.

Socrates made no attempt to systematize his teachings. Clearly enunciated principles run through them; but he was too many-sided to find definite categories in which they could be expressed. This many-sidedness, which so conspicuously characterized Socrates, largely accounts for the powerful influence he exercised over so many different thinkers. We are, therefore, prepared to discover his followers dividing themselves into separate schools. The most important of these, so far as the ethical foundation of society is concerned, are the Cynic, Cyrenaic, and Platonic. Each of these claimed Socrates as their teacher, and attributed to his influence the views they held. As might have been anticipated, however, each, by taking a separate part of the Socratic doctrines, not only emphasized it, but also developed it in such a manner as to make what was false and true in his own teachings more easily detected.

The Cynic school, founded by Antisthenes, and having as its most noted pupil the celebrated Diogenes, selected, after the example of Socrates, reason as the universal principle in man; and with him, too, they held that virtue is insight, and can be taught; but they exaggerated one side of the master's teachings when they maintained that the human passions are evil, and especially when they showed an ostentatious disregard for all that ministers to physical comfort. They, indeed, scorned alike specu-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

lation and pleasure. They thus prepared the way for the Stoics, whose asceticism in after ages became the object of emulation to those Christians who failed to see what place the right regulation of the body has in a well-conducted life. The Cyrenaics represented an opposite tendency. They, too, claimed to be following Socrates. Aristippus, the founder of the school, declared for pleasure as the only good. Present physical enjoyment constituted, according to him, the end of life; and how to extract from events the maximum of pleasure was the first and last duty of man. In his own life Aristippus illustrated his theory; for though he enjoyed much of Socrates' company, the master's example did not restrain him from sensual practices. He lived in luxury, and rejoiced in the motto, *mihi res, non me rebus subjungere*.¹

The position, however, which the Cyrenaics took up marks a distinct advance upon that of the Sophists. In their hands, the isolating egoism of the Sophists passes into hedonism. They have a definite end—*pleasure* which is realized in society. They therefore, historically, became the first thorough-going hedonists. Taken together with the Cynics, they represent two constantly recurring and clashing theories of life. The Stoics and Epicureans respectively developed these conflicting theories still further; in still later times they have been advocated, and to-day, after all has been said for and against them that can possibly be stated, they are adopted by the uneducated recluse, who is incapable of

¹ Horace, *Epist.* i. 1, 18.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

enjoying the pleasure of speculation, and by the "man of society," whose sole aim in life seems to be to extract from the passing hours the maximum of pleasure, without regard to the wider interests of his fellows, or to his own self-realization.

The narrow conceptions of life which Cynics and Cyrenaics entertained could not long prevail without encountering opposition. They were, indeed, too one-sided, and therefore far from satisfactory. Plato, with a juster estimate of his master's teachings, accordingly soon established another school, which at its inception at once exercised extraordinary influence, and has continued ever since to mould ethical thought; for all subsequent thinkers have been obliged to acknowledge their indebtedness to Plato.

1. Like Socrates, Plato was unable to embody all his conceptions of life in a system. Writing much, he attempted that which Socrates never tried, for he apparently aimed at giving to his teachings a definite form. No one can, however, pretend to say that Plato succeeded. He was too much of a prophet, and had too much of the prophet's insight to be able to reduce his conceptions to a formal creed. It is even doubtful whether he really saw the full significance of all the things which he taught. Few prophets have ever seen the far-reaching applications of truth and righteousness as enforced by themselves. Hence it happens that Plato sometimes appears to contradict himself; as, for instance, when in the *Protagoras*¹ he makes the virtues a whole, and again

¹ Vide *Protagoras*, pp. 329, 330.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

in the *Republic* separates them in his discussion of the constitution of the State.¹ The object which Plato had set before himself was to seek truth if haply he might find it; and in one notable passage he says that while he has a great love for Homer, no man, not even Homer, is "to be revered before the truth."²

2. Plato owed much to the magnetic influence exerted over him by the strong personality of Socrates, and, indirectly, much to the Cynics and Cyrenaics. Following the former, he became "the father of idealism," as Professor Jowett styles him,³ and, warned by the excesses of the latter, he became the type of that moderation which is absolutely essential in all investigations after the real and true. Socrates had prepared the way for idealism by substituting, as Professor Erdmann points out, knowledge for subjective opinion, and the idea for the finite end,⁴ but it was reserved for Plato to develop his master's dicta, and to teach that for all objects of thought there are corresponding ideas, and that the idea of the good is the highest. Plato is thus the true precursor of Hegel, whose teachings again are reflected in the works of all modern idealists. But just as Plato, when discussing theoretical questions, found in

¹ Socrates sets himself to discover the nature of justice by a "method of residues," and asks, "Is not a similar method to be pursued as to the virtues, which are four in number?" *The Republic*, book iv. 428.

² *Op. cit.* book x. 595.

³ Vide, *Introduction to the "Republic,"* p. 1.

⁴ Professor Erdmann's *History of Philosophy*, p. 85.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

idealism that which harmonizes the opposing elements in subjectivism and objectivism, so when dealing with practical questions, he took up a position midway between the hedonism of the Cyrenaics and the negation of pleasure by the Cynics. Virtue sought for its own sake is not, he held, inconsistent with happiness, but pleasure is not the end of life. Man must seek wisdom, which is the attribute of the Godhead ; for in seeking wisdom, he finds "the true consecration and purification of the soul." To be properly equipped in his search, knowledge is necessary, and is at the same time the greatest ornament of intellectual man. In the effort, however, to attain to wisdom it is soon discovered that virtue is not natural. Hence there is a constant struggle going on between the sensuous side of man's nature and his high ideals. The good and pleasure are not, therefore, one and the same ; for pleasure may be experienced in gratifying appetites, and the gratification of these, again, may hinder the successful pursuit of wisdom. Here Plato approximates to the teachings of St. Paul. He knows nothing, however, of grace as that which gives man the victory ; nor has he learned the value of humility as that which provides the conditions for the growth of virtue. On the contrary, Plato, while saying many things that help towards the perfect life, by his theory of the evil of matter gives countenance to Manichæism, which was the only solution that Eastern thought, Judaism excepted, had to offer for the ills of human life. Manichæans in Christian times could point, therefore, to his authority in support of this dualistic interpreta-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

tion of human life, though this doctrine had a distinctively Eastern origin.

3. In his discussion of the question of the good, Plato holds that it is the function of ethics to ascertain the meaning of *δικαιοσύνη*, *righteousness*, which is the adequate expression of *φρόνησις*, *insight*, as *σοφία*, *wisdom*, is its highest and last stage. Righteousness, or justice, though a distinct virtue, has to do with wisdom, manliness, and moderation. Justice is, indeed, the outcome of these virtues, and wherever they exist in perfect harmony justice is realized. The four virtues make for the good which is found in perfection only in the Deity. Here, as we have already seen, Plato makes the virtues a whole; but when he deals with the State, he separates them. The State is that in which the moral end is attained; for man is essentially social, and the highest life is realized in it. As in the case of the individual, so in that of the State, justice is the animating principle. "The State is the reality of which justice is the idea," and man ought to forget himself "in the thought of the whole of which he is a part." But while the State is thus supreme, Plato separates the virtues, and holds that there are distinct virtues for the different classes in the State, the rulers only being required to have them all. In his *Laws* he enters into particulars, and practically makes a distinction, which Aristotle emphasized, between the moral and physical, holding that health, beauty, strength and riches have a place, though subordinate to rational action, valour, moderation, and justice.

With Aristotle as with Plato, the State is supreme;

THE ETHICAL BASIS

but on several important questions the former differs from the latter. (1) Aristotle will not allow that, so far as man is concerned, ideas can be separated from physical life. (2) For him the highest moral end is happiness, which, however, is not to be understood as mere sensuous enjoyment, but activity of the rational part of man's nature. (3) Virtue, which Aristotle defines as praiseworthy habit,¹ has to do with feelings and actions; and in investigations as to the nature of virtue care must be taken to distinguish between that which is voluntary and that which is involuntary.² (4) Aristotle separates such mental exercises as insight, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding from such moral virtues as moderation, liberality, and gentleness. He dissents, therefore, from the teachings of Socrates, who, he says, held that all virtues are "forms of reason," "modes of knowledge"; whereas "we hold," he adds, "that they imply reason."³ This distinction is of the utmost importance for ethics, since it makes plain what is the domain of moral actions. The emphasis is taken off *knowledge* and placed upon *will*. (5) Aristotle seems to have made this fundamental distinction in order that he might more clearly define the content of virtue, and be able at the same time to indicate what yields the highest kind of pleasure. Virtue, according to his teachings, is essentially self-control, moderation, the right regulation of competing desires by reason: virtue is not only a habit in accordance with the dictates of reason, it is "a habit

¹ *Nicomachean Ethics*, book i. 13. ² *Op. cit.* book iii. 1.

³ *Op. cit.* book vi. 13, 4.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

implying right reason.”¹ For Aristotle the State is a necessity, because in it virtue is best developed, and there, too, man realizes his moral aim; for the individual must give place to the family, and the family to the State, if the highest life is to be attained. The good of the State “is a grander and more perfect thing to attain” than the good of the individual, and it “is nobler and more God-like” to render a service to the State than to the individual.² But though Aristotle so closely identifies morals and politics, that he finds in the State the conditions for the development of virtue, he seems, towards the end of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, to express a formal preference for the pursuit and contemplation of wisdom as that which lifts one above time conditions, and gives the highest pleasure, for in such pursuit and contemplation the activity of the rational part of the soul is most unrestrained, and “the more contemplation the more pleasure there is in life.”³

The ethical studies of Plato and Aristotle have an enduring interest for modern sociologists. Their excellencies and defects show at once how much they accomplished and what were their natural limitations. Dealing with the same mental and moral phenomena as now command attention, their contributions towards the solution of the questions which these phenomena present are very decided, and of great value. Judged by the work of their predecessors, their ethical studies show a marked advance. Their analysis of motives and ends is more thorough, while

¹ *Nicomachean Ethics*, book vi. 13, 5. ² *Op. cit.* book i. 7.

³ Book x. 8.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

their outline of duties is also more distinct. In so far as they subordinate the individual to the State, and insist upon the benefits of society, they strike at the roots of egoism, and at least prepare the way for altruism. The State, they teach, is worthy of care, and that chiefly because man realizes his highest interests within it. But their horizon was limited. They did not see far beyond the State. Their standard was accordingly national; and when the Grecian kingdom came to an end, their ethical system also was doomed. It is true that subsequent thinkers have been able to take out the permanent principles embodied in their teachings, and show that they have a universal application, but so far as the masters themselves were concerned the Greek State, and especially Athens, was their goal. Within the State they recognised, and this was a further defect, the right of men to hold their fellows in slavery. Slavery was, indeed, essential to the social structure they outlined. There is, therefore, nothing in their teachings which would imply that all men ought to enjoy freedom. The rights of man, as man, had indeed no place in their systems. There were accordingly many virtues that are now seen to be necessary for society which they did not see. The luminous virtues, humility, mercy, brotherhood, love, and a forgiving disposition, were all overlooked. Hence society as described by them could not endure. It might for a time avail for a few, but it could not be taken as a type which might be copied and imitated by men of all times and all lands. An abiding State could not indeed be built upon the virtues which Plato and Aristotle

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

emphasized. The great changes effected within Greece by foreign invasion shattered and destroyed the Greek State; but invasion was not such a great calamity as it at first appeared to be, for it opened the door for the entrance of the religious ideas of the East, and Oriental philosophy. There was not, it is true, much in the latter which Greek thought had not anticipated, and even surpassed, but the religious and moral ideas of the Hebrews enormously enriched Greek life.

There is only too much ground for holding that the ethical contributions of the Jews have not received at the hands of modern thinkers the attention which they deserve. United with claims which are based on the supernatural, they have for that reason received scant notice; but however accounted for, or whatever may have been their origin, Hebrew hagiology and prophecy contain some of the loftiest ethical conceptions that make for the most prosperous state and the best service. And, when it is remembered that the seventh century *before Christ* was the period of Hebrew literary activity, and that much of what is best in Old Testament religion belongs to this time, it will be further seen that long before Socrates or Plato taught, in Hebrew lands great ethical principles had been enunciated. The book of Job¹ had given the true moral ends of suffering. The prophets had insisted upon righteousness, fair dealing, and equity. They were, as Carlyle says, the great preachers of

¹ JOB may belong to an early date, but cannot be placed later than the Exile: *vide* Professor Bruce's Gifford Lectures, *The Providential Order*, p. 260.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

righteousness. Righteousness in their teachings meant judgment upon all that is impure, false, and proud, and its ethical results were truth, faithfulness, and uprightness. But the prophets also deal with the grave fact of sin, and rest their appeals upon man's moral consciousness. They do not argue about these facts; they accept them; and whether speaking of the Divine righteousness and mercy or of man's disorganized condition, their references are of a universalistic character. God's mercy is over all His works; and man, sinful and weary, finds a home only in Him.

If, then, the contribution which the Hebrews make to ethics be carefully considered, it will be seen that they both anticipate and go far beyond Greek thought; that the historical continuity of their teachings is found in the New Testament, where, as almost all authorities acknowledge, the highest ethical precepts are inculcated; and that the moral and religious ideas of the Hebrews account for the subsequent broadening out of ethical systems, and render possible the universalistic conceptions of the Stoics. It is not necessary at this stage to attempt a development of these statements. We shall have occasion to refer at length in a future chapter to the ethics of Christianity as fundamental to right social relationships; for society as it is in modern Europe to-day cannot be interpreted apart from the ethics of the Christian religion. We make these statements rather for the purpose of showing how we pass over to the Stoic and Epicurean schools.

Zeno and Epicurus represent two opposite views of

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

life. They are the intellectual successors of the Cynics and Cyrenaics, but their ethical standpoint is largely affected by what both Plato and Aristotle had taught, and still more by the inrush of new ideas from the East, consequent upon the conquests of Alexander the Great. For the history of ethics they are of great importance, and, when once their respective theories are understood, we may pass by the Sceptics, from Pyrrho of Elis to Sextus Empiricus, whose position, with many variations, generally implied the negation of all criteria of truth; the Roman Syncretists, Cicero and Seneca, who for the most part were content to reproduce in literary form what the Greek moralists had stated; and also the Fathers of the Christian Church and the Schoolmen, who were too much engaged in formulating doctrines and elaborating sacramental theories to do justice to the ethical content of Christianity.

Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school, Cleanthes, his immediate successor, and notably Chrysippus, attempted an answer to the three questions: What is the world? What is man? and What is God? Attracted by the pantheism of the Eleatics, they professed to discover in pantheism, and in its consequent doctrine of fatalism, a satisfactory explanation of each of these questions. Their interpretation was materialistic. The essence of the Divine nature and the soul of man is fire, $\pi\upsilon\rho$, or like fire; it burns, but does not consume; it has also an architectonic force which makes for growth. God is in all things, and all things return to Him. The world is a manifestation of God, but is not to be thought of as apart from Him.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

The Platonic theory of ideas has no place in Stoicism, for a direct denial is given to things existing only in thought; and the position thus taken up led, again, to their impatience of all theorizings, and to their emphatic insistence on practice. Their pantheism finds many expressions, but in nothing so beautifully as in Cleanthes' hymn to Zeus.

Whatever may be said for or against Stoicism, it must at least be recognised that it is marked by a wonderful consistency. It makes a vigorous effort to discover universal principles and to express all things in universal terms. The vast universe is a unity; man, nature, and God are one, and, therefore, the highest life is lived when man lives "according to nature." That is a universal formula, and applies to all men without respect to social position or place or time; for men are of one race, and the same rule applies to all. In perfect consistency with their own views, and yet at the same time reflecting the influence of Socrates and Plato upon them, they further held that knowledge is ascertainable, the virtues a whole, and a criterion of truth possible;¹ but, holding these things, they even went further than the great masters, for they developed the idea of *duty* in a manner that had no parallel in previous Greek history. It is man's first duty, they said, to live according to nature. The human passions—pleasure and fear, desire and grief—have no moral content;

¹ Aristotle maintained that a criterion of truth could not be found, and that it was useless to inquire after it; the Stoics not only held that a criterion could be ascertained, but also that it consisted in living according to the dictates of nature.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

external possessions—health, riches, and the like—have no moral qualities. The sage, as the later Stoics held, may use them for a good purpose; fools abuse them. Everything depends upon right conduct, and right conduct is action according to nature. Self-realization depends upon the state of the heart, and the highest life is lived not by regulating human passions, but by repressing them. To insist upon a number of moral maxims, as Aristotle did, only tends to burden and confuse one. The general principle, obedience to which secures true freedom and issues in wisdom, is that of indifference, ἀπάθεια, to all outward things. This is the rule which guides the lives of the sages, who find in obedience to it the bond of friendship, which, again, unites them together and makes for cosmopolitanism. The sage alone is, therefore, the happy man; he lives a life free from care, is capable of quiet contemplation, and if troubles press hard upon him, he can easily escape them by the simple act of suicide.

That Stoicism, in spite of its general consistency, contains contradictory elements is beyond dispute. In some respects its ethics is far in advance of all previous systems, but its defects prevented it from gaining universal acceptance, though many in Greece, and afterwards in Rome, adopted it as a satisfying theory of life. The pantheistic postulates of Zeno and his followers largely explain the defects of Stoicism; for with the Stoics, as with all other men, theological conceptions have a determining influence on their ethical theories. Every man who thinks is bound, indeed, to have some conception of the universe

THE ETHICAL BASIS

and the Power which governs it, whether that Power is believed to be personal or impersonal; and the history of philosophy abundantly proves that whatever ideas are entertained respecting that Power have a direct bearing upon ethics. The Stoics were not excepted from the operations of this general principle. The following defects of Stoicism, therefore, deserve attention. *First*, accepting pantheism and its attendant determinism, the Stoics were not free from the charge of inconsistency when, on the one hand, they counselled submission to the course of the universe, which they interpreted as resignation to the will of the Deity and His actions; and, on the other, held that human passions are things which ought to be repressed; for the passions are part of man's nature, and as such cannot be disregarded without injustice being done to the constitution of his being. When Chrysippus changed the formula of Zeno and Cleanthes, "live according to nature," into "live according to your own nature," he clearly recognised the validity of the objections that might be urged, but it cannot be said that his altered formula gets rid of the objections. *Second*, their doctrine of *apatheia* did not bear the test of experience. How far this is a legitimate statement may be seen from the circumstance that the later Stoics, recognising the weakness of their position, made a quantitative distinction between outward things, and gave to certain of them a preference over others. Epictetus, indeed, according to the testimony of Arrian, went so far as to say that sufferings make for the development of character. In this admission we see the influence

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of the new spirit introduced by Christianity, though we are not required to believe that Epictetus was brought into personal relations with Christian disciples, or even that he was conscious of the origin of the influence. A new moral atmosphere had, however, been created by Christianity, and the later Stoics were obliged to breathe it. *Third*, the same influence may be traced in the correction of another one-sided view. The earlier Stoics had said the wise do not need the Divine care, and that fools do not deserve it; but the later Stoics, with a distinct leaning towards theism, taught that all men are of one race, and that God cares for all. *Fourth*, it is a further defect of Stoicism that it fails to reconcile its doctrine of self-sufficiency with that of universal human interests; but in this instance its advocates, like those of many another system, were better than their creed, for they insisted upon the discharge of civic duties which strengthened the State, and obligations which benefited the race.

But against these defects of Stoicism there are several distinctive and positive tenets which the Stoics held and taught. These at once mark the enormous advance which they made, and the credit that is due to them. *First*, in their hands the ethics of politics passes into the ethics of humanity; the province of ethics is no longer defined by the limits of citizenship. Moral obligations are far wider than the State. They belong to man, as such, without respect to time or place; for everywhere there are obligations and privileges; and thus, in proclaiming these truths, the Stoics force the ethics of the State into the ethics

THE ETHICAL BASIS

of humanity. *Second*, they were the first among the Greeks to teach a definite doctrine of providence. The human race, they held, is under moral order. Against this the Epicureans protested, and maintained that belief in the gods was founded on superstition and terror; but these protests and negations did not shake the faith of the Stoics, who, in defending their views, gradually passed from pantheistic to theistic conceptions. *Third*, their doctrine of a Divine providence led to belief in "the rationality of the universe." Unable to interpret life's perplexing questions by the aid of theories which were limited in their operations, they boldly broke away from all previous interpretations and declared for universal reason as that which offered a satisfactory explanation. *Fourth*, following, again, from their universal conceptions respecting the Deity and man, came one of the most important doctrines now associated with their name—that, namely, of friendship. This, they affirmed, is the universal bond which binds men together, and makes for brotherhood. They set no store upon "class distinctions and national divergencies;" these, indeed, they set aside. Man, as man, has rights and endowments which, if well employed, give him a high place in the economy of the universe. Class distinctions may stand in the way of, but cannot destroy, man's worth. The Stoics accordingly laid the greatest stress upon the infinite worth of man, and backed him against the wide world. The slave may become a sage; Epictetus, indeed, attains to the highest honours, and that because he was true to himself. *Fifth*, the later Stoics grasped more firmly

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

than even Socrates or Plato had done the unity of the virtues; and upon that unity they rested the unity of moral responsibility. It is true that Zeno had declared for insight and Chrysippus for wisdom as the chief virtue; but here, again, a wider experience and truer generalizations taught their followers to perceive that virtue is a whole, and that there is laid upon every man the moral responsibility of cultivating virtue for its own sake. Virtue is unattainable if any one of its traits is neglected; to err in respect of any one of them is to vitiate the whole.

It is extremely difficult to say to what extent the later Stoics were influenced by Christianity, or how much of their ethical teachings is due to it. Marcus Aurelius, while opposing the fundamental truths of Christianity, and bitterly persecuting the Christians, putting to death, among others, the saintly Polycarp and Irenæus, has, in his *Tὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν*, stated many moral maxims that now receive general acceptance, and has supplied abundant proof of the intense ethical purpose which animated Stoicism. But even at its origin the system produced many fine characters. The story of the keys of the fortress of the city being entrusted to Zeno may be only a myth; but whether or not, it at least reflects the common estimate in which the Stoics were held, and the honesty and uprightness which were attributed to them. The Stoics' direct appeal to the vital moral principle, which man, if true to himself, must obey, explains their entire system, and marks also the great contribution which Stoicism made to the right understanding of society.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

Epicurean ethics throws little additional light upon ethico-social relationships. This, however, does not mean that Epicureans made no contribution to sociology. On the contrary, dissatisfied with the crude hedonism of the Cyrenaics, they were the first to state with anything like fulness the claims of hedonism as it is now understood. All things, they maintained, must be judged according as they make for what is useful; the useful, again, being that which secures the greatest sum of enjoyments; and the later Epicureans, if the testimony of Cicero be accepted, went so far as to say that even virtue must be judged by this standard. Epicurus did not lay undue stress upon present enjoyment; he subordinated the present to the future, and taught that pain ought to be submitted to, if afterwards it yields peace of mind. In postponing, therefore, the pleasures of the present, Epicurus passes unconsciously from egoism to utilitarianism. The historical origin of utilitarianism, indeed, is found in his teachings. He did not, it is true, go so far as to teach the doctrine of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," but he certainly laid the basis of that doctrine in his teachings on friendship; for true friendship has regard for the welfare of others, and to the extent which it necessitates the subordination of one's own enjoyment to the happiness of friends, it makes possible the theory of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. It was, however, reserved for subsequent utilitarians, partly from the pressure of arguments urged against egoism, and partly from the inadequacy of the severely individualistic conception of the end of human life, to broaden

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

the basis of conduct by insisting upon the happiness of the greatest number as the end of actions.

Epicureans eliminate the ethical element. According to their theory there is no such thing as absolute truth. Actions designated virtuous are so named from mere conventionalism. The only standard by which certain things are preferred and others rejected is that of agreeable feelings; but manifestly, feelings are too subjective to become a rule of conduct; for that which is agreeable to one person may be disagreeable to another. Sensual pleasure is sure, for instance, to be rejected by the man who finds satisfaction in calm reflection. It was, indeed, this very circumstance which led to the teachings of Epicurus being so greatly misunderstood. In his famous garden, the *Κῆποι Ἐπικούρου*, the founder of the school, surrounded by his numerous friends, lived a quiet, temperate, and cheerful life, and found *his* pleasure in discussing questions bearing upon the origin of the world and the beliefs of the day; but many of his followers in subsequent times found *their* pleasure in eating and drinking, saying, "To-morrow we die." The difference in these two modes of life, therefore, though both profess pleasure as their aim, shows how impossible it is to discover a standard of conduct in hedonism. Epicurus delighted in what he called spiritual pleasures, freedom from pain, *ἀταραξία* and *ἀπονία*, supplied him with an ideal; but his disciples were far from being satisfied with the same object, and many of them gave abundant occasion for comic poets to asperse the Epicurean system.

It was the aim of Epicurus to set human conduct

THE ETHICAL BASIS

on a new basis; and however strange at first sight it may appear, yet he employed a method almost identical with that which modern hedonists of the Spencerian school have used. To him religion and superstition were synonymous; and as moral actions were largely based on religious postulates, he undertook to get rid of the supernatural, and set morals on a rational basis. This is exactly what Mr. Herbert Spencer has attempted. To him, as to Epicurus, religion is a form of superstition; and in his preface to the *Data of Ethics* he tells us that he has made haste to establish ethics on a scientific basis, lest the social fabric should fall before morals are set upon a permanent foundation.

Epicurus and Mr. Spencer have both adopted particular physical theories of the universe, and the application of their respective theories to morals has been held to contain a solution of all ethical problems. Neither Epicurus nor Lucretius, to whom we are largely indebted for our knowledge of Epicureanism, knew anything of evolution; but Epicurus, according to Lucretius, propounded a physical theory which delivered men from the fears and terrors which are the motives to religious profession. Epicurus did not altogether deny the existence of the gods; he was, however, very sceptical; men sleeping or awake see *divôm egregias facies*.¹ These visions give birth to fears which are handed down from generation to generation; hence religion is resorted to as an escape from them. But these fears vanish when it is seen that the world is the resultant of "a

¹ Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, book v. 1168.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

fortuitous combination of atoms," and the soul but a finer form of these atoms; when separated from the body at death, the soul atoms are dispersed; they are not, however, destroyed, for they are indestructible: they go off to form other combinations; but, in leaving one body to go to another, personal identity ends and consciousness ceases. Why, then, argued Epicurus, should men be distressed? Fears are ephemeral, as honours are vain. There is nothing for any person beyond death; the hereafter is a blank; therefore cultivate now and here what yields the highest enjoyment.

That Epicurus was conscious of the difficulties which his system contained is evident, but he was both very unwilling to acknowledge that he owed anything to others, though it is quite plain that he was greatly indebted to Democritus,¹ and very reluctant to confess that his interpretation failed at any point. He had, for instance, to account for freedom, and this he did by the assumption that somehow the falling atoms, which have weight as well as size and shape, possessed the power of spontaneous deflection; but this explanation satisfied few, and accordingly we find Cicero stigmatizing it as "mere puerility." How very imperfectly Epicureans interpreted physical phenomena we have now no great difficulty in perceiving; and yet, if allowance is made for changed times, and the vast stores of information which have within recent years been collected, there is not, after all, a very great difference between the attempt of Epicurus and that of Mr. Spencer to

¹ Cicero, *De Fin.* i. 6.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

explain away religion and establish morals on a new basis. We do not for a moment make a comparison between atomism and evolution. Their respective merits put such a comparison out of court; for whereas atomism was a mere guess, evolution, within certain limits, is supported by scientific facts which are beyond dispute. But while this holds good, on the other hand it is also true that, for those who sought to establish ethics on a rational basis in ancient times, atomism represented the sum of the results of physical research; it was the last word they had to say, and they were full of assurance in saying it. Witness the confident and glowing eulogies of Lucretius' verses. The poet is as full of commiseration for those who are benighted with religion as any Spencerian can be to-day, and he is quite sure that his theory solves all questions. The atomic theory, however, even when first propounded, was seen to contain assumptions and present difficulties which made it unacceptable to men like the Stoics, who believed in the truthfulness of their own moral judgments as against mere feelings. The former, in their opinion, afforded a sufficiently strong basis for society, the latter did not.

Atomism has long since been relegated to the list of questions that have merely an antiquarian interest; but as an attempt, notable and much applauded in its day, to get rid of the supernatural, and to give to morals a new basis, it is not without significance. It was left to natural science to combat its physical theory of the universe; and with the advance of science that was easily done. Opposition, however,

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

was not at first offered to it on physical, but on moral grounds; and in this respect the attitude that was taken up in relation to it presents a striking parallel to that taken in reference to evolution; for evolution as a theory of the universe has received only a qualified approval, and that not because there are physical phenomena which it has to explain, but chiefly because its interpretation of ethical phenomena is unsatisfactory. What may be the ultimate fate of evolution, so far as it deals with the material and animal worlds, cannot even yet be decided; for it is conceivable that ampler research may produce a change of mind with respect to it as remarkable and startling as that which has taken place with respect to atomism; but whatever the ultimate issue of further physical research, already its claims are seriously disputed on moral grounds. The Stoics have, therefore, their successors in those moralists who oppose a physical interpretation of the universe for ethical reasons.

III

The review which we have made of the ethics of ancient Greece enables us to perceive what her great thinkers held to be the moral foundations of society, and what were at once the limitations and attainments of her most distinguished teachers. Three things stand out distinctly. *First*, we see in Socrates' and notably in Plato's teachings, the beginnings of that idealism which, coming through Hegel, has a powerful fascination for all idealists of modern

THE ETHICAL BASIS

times, who profess to find in it that which best explains social relationships. *Second*, we observe that those who declare for utilitarianism or hedonism have their respective doctrines defined in Epicureanism; for in so far as Epicurus laid emphasis upon the useful and pleasurable, he states their positions, though not with the fulness which afterwards marked the development of utilitarianism and hedonism. And, *third*, we notice that Stoicism has anticipated much that is in Christian ethics, and in modern ethical theories. (1) Without question the Stoics were among the first to recognise the universal obligations of moral law. They liberated ethics; and their insight into its content was as remarkable as their disinterested actions, which again were the outward expression of their interpretation of the claims of the moral law. They bore evidence to the fact that men everywhere, and without respect to nationality, "are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them."¹ Much more than Stoicism, Christianity unfolded the content of moral law; but in their universal ethical conceptions both assume moral intuitions. (2) The Stoics' formula, "live according to nature," is but another form of the conclusions reached by many modern ethical teachers. According to the Stoics, the pursuit of virtue for its own sake is the chief end of life. In their view, as in that of Professor

¹ Rom. ii. 14, 15, Rev. Ver. Meyer *in loc.* quotes a number of classical parallels in support of this statement.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Sorley, this is an "end which cannot be interpreted as a mere means to some further end."¹ It is the chief aim of life; but yet, again,—and in this they agree with what Butler taught—they held that there is an ultimate coincidence of virtue with happiness. Happiness is not that which men are to seek, virtue must be their aim; but in pursuing virtue, happiness or satisfaction is experienced. But virtue, according to the Stoics, is living in obedience to the dictates of nature; and here, as Professor Caird has pointed out, Kant comes near to their position,² for he insists upon conformity to reason,³ and holds that virtue must be pursued because it is one's duty to live a virtuous life. The end of life is obedience to reason, and this is almost identical with the Stoics' "live according to nature."

Other illustrations might be quoted, but these are enough to show the influence which ancient Greek moralists exerted over subsequent writers. Of these moralists, the Epicureans and Stoics seem to have produced the most direct results. Not, indeed, until the rise of Neo-Platonism in Christian times is the influence of Plato or that of Aristotle an actual factor. For some hundreds of years the concrete systems advocated by Epicurean and Stoic teachers

¹ *Ethics of Naturalism*, p. 5.

² Vide *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, vol. ii. pp. 222 *et seq.*

³ The distinction which Kant made between speculative and practical reason was made for philosophical purposes; and, as Professor Sorley says, "we must always bear in mind that it is the same reason which is in one reference speculative, in another practical." *Op. cit.* p. 4.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

held the field; but during this long period little was added to the teachings of the founders of these systems. It was reserved for still later times, to see a development of hedonism and altruism.

IV

In our investigations of the moral foundations of society we now pass to Christian times; but in passing over to them it is not our intention to look for an interpretation of ethical principles in the writings of either the Fathers of the Church or in those of the Schoolmen. The Fathers of the Church dealt with the ethical content of Christianity in different ways. Tertullian, for instance, regarded Christianity as a power working in a society separate from the world. Clement of Alexandria, notably in his *Stromata*, adopted Greek ideas, and combining these with Christian ideas, tried to show that Christianity stands, as an ethical system, far higher than Epicureanism and Stoicism. Cyprian, with his well-known hierarchical theories, in his *De Ecclesiæ Unitate*, identifies ethics with the Church. Augustine sanctioned asceticism, and thus prepared the way for the adoption of the mediæval virtues, virginity and poverty. The Mystics ended in the negation of the world as the place in which evil prevails. The Schoolmen regarded it as one of their greatest triumphs that they succeeded in reducing the number of the virtues to seven, as the sacraments, and the sins they respectively counteracted, were seven. To the Greek virtues, *bravery, self-control, justice, and wisdom*, they added *faith, hope, and charity*, and so

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

got their seven virtues. As we have already pointed out, patristic and scholastic theologians were so much occupied with developing doctrines, that ethical questions received comparatively little attention. It is true that Augustine carried on a long discussion with Pelagius and Cælestius on such questions as original sin, free-will, predestination, and the like, but these had far more a doctrinal than an ethical bearing. The Schoolmen, again, discussed *ad infinitum* the same questions, along with many inquiries as to sacramental theories; but the bearing of these on the end of life, or as essential factors in society, was scarcely noticed. Even the reintroduction of Platonic and Aristotelian theories of life had neither for the Fathers nor the Schoolmen an interest other than speculative, or at the utmost doctrinal.

It is only, therefore, when we come to comparatively modern times that we find the ethical basis of society again discussed. The revived interest in classical studies led to a reproduction of Greek ethical theories, and these were so developed under the influence which Christianity had created that the ethical conceptions with which we are now familiar soon became questions of eager discussion both in Britain and on the Continent. Indeed, as the wide field of ethical inquiry is traversed, and note is taken of the contributions that have been made to the science of ethics as that on which the science or society largely rests, it is at once perceived that there is scarcely a single ethical theory which was not anticipated then with more or less distinctness. Hedonism and eudæmonism were restated and am-

THE ETHICAL BASIS

plified. Idealism, so long exclusively identified with the name of Plato, was taken over by Cudworth and Cumberland in this country, and by Kant and Hegel on the Continent, and further developed. Intuitionism was also strenuously advocated; and even ethics based on physiology was suggested, though only in an indistinct manner. To what extent Mr. Spencer has been anticipated may be seen by a brief reference to the theories of those who preceded him. Thus, Hume, and Bentham before him, laid emphasis upon the idea of causation. Mr. Spencer, indeed, says that the ethics of his predecessors are "characterized either by an entire absence of the idea of causation, or by inadequate presence of it."¹ This, however, is scarcely correct, for it has been a distinguishing feature of all utilitarian theories that they have had as their end either eudæmonism or hedonism as a result that follows upon definite actions; and if this does not embody the idea of causation, nothing else can. Hume and Bentham, as directly as Mr. Spencer, trace moral sentiments to the natural instincts which oblige men to seek agreeable feelings and avoid the painful. Again, Mr. Spencer claims to have shown that society is the outcome of the operation of psychological and physical laws; but here also he has been anticipated, for Bacon and Shaftesbury postulated psychological data,² and Hartley adopted a theory which "assumes

¹ *Data of Ethics*, p. 49.

² "Shaftesbury is the first moralist who distinctly takes psychological experience as the basis of ethics." Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 189.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

the complete correspondence of mind and body." Further, Locke, Hartley, and Mill developed the theory of "association of ideas," which Mr. Spencer, with some modifications, has woven into his expositions of life; and, finally, Bentham anticipated Mr. Spencer in what many regard as most distinctive of his ethical theory, when he says the rule to be followed in seeking the end of life is to seek whatever makes for the preservation of the individual, the family, and the State. In a passage which we shall afterwards quote,¹ he argues that the happiness of the individual is secured through that of the community, though neither he nor Mr. Spencer says what is to be done when the interests of each clash and oppose the other. Those who belong to the Spencerian school may, however, claim, as many of them do, that they have made quite an original and scientific contribution to the science of ethics; and, further, that the researches of physical science have abundantly verified their ethical theory. The assurance with which this double claim is made, lacks nothing of hesitation. On the contrary, it is often insisted on with a confidence which savours of that dogmatism which the "scientific moralist" reprobrates with the severest language that his vocabulary contains. But this apart, it is still true that in the earnest discussion of ethical questions even ethics evolved from physiology was suggested, though not called by the name of evolution.

¹ p. 121.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

V

It may, then, serve a useful purpose if an attempt is made to ascertain what ethical principles were adopted as the basis of social relationships during the period which immediately succeeded the revival of philosophic studies. For this purpose it is not necessary to go further back than the time of Bacon. He and his successors set themselves to develop ethics with the view of showing how it told on society. It will be our aim, then, to discover what reception ethical theories, aiming at practical ends, had at the hands of competent thinkers; and when this is accomplished, we shall see which of these theories has most to recommend it, and in what way the one best supported makes for further social development.

Bacon separated or tried to separate ethics from religion and metaphysics. Hitherto, he maintained, men had been trammelled by religious beliefs. In this, he therefore goes back to the position of the Cyrenaics and Epicureans, whose chief complaint was that religion, by ministering to superstition, obscured moral issues. Bacon accordingly bases morality in neither religious nor metaphysical postulates,¹ but in psychology. He thus set an example which many recent writers have followed. With him public utility is the end of ethical action; its source is the *lux naturalis*; but whether this is innate,

¹ Bacon recognises the useful service which religion may render in elevating moral sentiments; but still, he holds, ethics is not based on religion.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

or merely due to education, he does not say. Hobbes, with a strong bias towards egoistic hedonism, adopts much that is characteristic of Baconian ethics; but he maintains, much more emphatically than Bacon, that society rests upon egoism *plus* political order. The civil law, in the opinion of Hobbes, is supreme, and he would have endorsed the extraordinary statement which Maître Clemenceau made in the famous Zola trial, when he said, "There is no justice outside the law." According to Hobbes, too, the original springs of human actions are selfish, and lead to a state of war; and, therefore, all acts are manifestly performed with a view to the gratification of the individual. The State is a necessity; but yet the very motives which urge men to submit to legal enactments are selfish.

Hobbes' interpretation of ethics and society soon, however, provoked opposition. Cudworth led the attack. He held by the objectivity of the moral law, which reason, because it is a Divine gift or an emanation from the Divine Reason, apprehends and acknowledges. According to Cudworth, moral truths are innate, and axiomatic; they are not dependent upon mere will, human or Divine, the will of the ruler or the will of God; they exist objectively, and present to the mind ideas which it is man's duty to endeavour to realize. The influence of Descartes upon Cudworth and his successors is easily traced. Descartes had taken over the Platonic doctrine of ideas along with the dualism which it postulated. He gave, however, to dualism a new interpretation. The mechanical theory of the world which then prevailed prevented,

THE ETHICAL BASIS

as M. Fouillée has recently shown, thinkers from entertaining right sociological conceptions; but though thus trammelled, Descartes aimed at finding an ethical basis for society. In order to do this successfully he had first to define the origin and character of ethics itself; he offered at once an intellectual and an emotional interpretation. He was idealistic in so far as he held that moral ideas are intellectual truths; the intellect apprehends these ideas if it has clear knowledge; but clear knowledge does not always obtain, for the soul and body being united, the operations of the soul are clogged by those of the body. Evil, however, is not—as Plato and the Manichæans, and indeed also as some Christians who betook themselves to a hermit's life taught—to be traced immediately to matter. The union of soul and body is a Divine appointment, and, therefore, as Descartes said, natural; yet the action of the body on the soul tells adversely upon the soul, and gives rise to emotions. So far as these emotions clog and obscure the soul, it is the province of Will to master them, and the right is attained when the mastery is won. Descartes thus gives two theories, one of which Cudworth, Cumberland, Price, Samuel Clarke, and all intellectualists have adopted; the other the adherents of the sentimental school, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Butler, etc., have developed.

With Cudworth morality is right knowledge or insight; ethical truths are at once apprehended by the intellect; and they are valid for conduct as mathematics is for physical science. Henry More, though one of the Cambridge moralists, does not

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

follow Cudworth in his thorough adoption of intellectualism.¹ He is also too indefinite as to what are ethical criteria, now making them hedonistic, as when he makes the pleasure one experiences in doing virtuous actions the criterion, and now altruistic as when he insists upon living for the good of others. Cumberland declares for "the common welfare" as the end of moral actions, and thus seems to approach utilitarianism; but as the latter theory denies the validity of the grounds on which intellectualism rests, he departs from utilitarianism when he says that to do good is a primary instinct; that the moral law is implanted in human nature; and that ethical qualities are not created by, but only displayed and employed in, social relationships. Whatever else may be said on behalf of the intellectual school, it is manifest enough that they did not a little to prepare the way for modern idealists; and that, in relation to the motives which are so much needed for the right discharge of social obligations, they called attention to forgotten aspects of Christianity, and showed whence comes the moral power which issues in brotherliness and service. We do not say they made these quite plain. Though they lived in an age when ethical questions were greatly obscured, nevertheless the work done by them rendered the labours of subsequent

¹ Erdmann points out the different phases of belief through which More passed. He held first by pantheism, and from it passed on to Cartesianism, and from that to a peculiar combination of Platonism and Cartesianism. His philosophy was as indefinite as his ethics. According to Erdmann he "in a very special degree paved the way for realism." *Op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 99.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

workers on behalf of social well-being much easier. They were, perhaps unconsciously, but really, social reformers, in so far as they were among the first to establish ethics on a sure basis, and make possible, valid foundations for society.

Locke partly returns to the ethical negations of Hobbes. He denies to laws of thought universality, and to moral ideas innateness. He is thus opposed to the intellectualists ; but, on the other hand, he cannot be classified with Hobbes ; for unlike him, he does not deny that truth is intuitively perceived, nor does he separate religion from ethics ; on the contrary, he traces the source of moral obligation to the Divine will ; God manifests Himself through our moral experience, and reflection enables us to put a right interpretation on the manifestation. Moral ideas are not originally in the mind, for the mind is a blank, on which, however, impressions are made through sensation and reflection. But moral ideas and commands come to us through Revelation ; and with these what comes from experience agrees, the only differences being that the former comes through a supernatural and the latter through a natural agency ;¹ and that the natural law is common to all men, while Revelation has been made known only to a few. This natural law is, according to Locke, the real basis of society ; for if the law of the State and that of *public opinion* be added, they, too, in their last analysis, are but expressions of natural law. Reflection is supreme, and the standard of morals is subjective.

¹ These views are stated at length by Locke in his treatise on *The Remarkableness of Christianity*.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

A theory which breaks with both hedonism and intellectualism in many of their main features could not fail to be assailed. It was soon accordingly contended by hedonists and intellectualists that Locke's interpretation of social and ethical phenomena was defective. The former could not be satisfied, because it gave to the theory of "pleasure and pain" only a subordinate place ; nor the latter because it denied the objectivity of morals. Samuel Clarke's *Boyle Lectures* are largely taken up with a statement and defence of the objective standard of ethics ; and all later hedonists, more or less fully, attack Locke's theory of reflection, and endeavour to find in *pleasure* the test of moral action.

VI

We have now reached that stage in the history of ethics where the germ of all future ethical systems is seen ; and since it is our main object to discover what are the ethical foundations of society, our purpose will be best served if we merely pass, in a brief review, the different theories that have been subsequently developed, and try to find general principles which will offer a rational explanation of the way in which these theories have come to be held. To attempt these two things is enough, for the history of ethics has already and often been written with great detail, and the student has no difficulty in finding abundant literature on the subject. For our purpose, too, it is far more important that we should be able to note the operations of general principles. Consciously or

THE ETHICAL BASIS

unconsciously all writers have been obedient to their operations; for even the strongest man is powerfully affected by his environment and the thoughts and theories of his day.

In indicating briefly the ethical theories that have been developed we begin with Shaftesbury, the first moralist in modern times who boldly declares for intuitionism. Shaftesbury is sometimes spoken of as the founder of the sentimental school, as, for instance, by Mr. Selby-Bigge in his *British Moralists*. The influence of Descartes was certainly as great over him as it was over Cudworth and his school; but whereas Cudworth developed Descartes' *intellectualism*, Shaftesbury laid special emphasis upon his *emotional* interpretation of moral phenomena. He declared for the innateness of moral ideas; and, with considerable insight, anticipating the position adopted by many sociologists of the present time, held that the balance of self-regard and social affections makes for the perservation of social life. To seek one's own benefit is not enough; the welfare of others must also be sought; and to preserve an equilibrium between these two objects constitutes the chief good. The claims of self and those of our fellows have "equal primariness"; virtue is the mean between them, and is its own reward.¹ Shaftesbury enjoys the distinction of being the first among modern moralists to recognise that the ethical content of religion is its chief recommendation. The moral law does not appeal to us merely because it has a religious basis, but because

¹ *Vide* Dr. Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory*, vol. ii. p. 462.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of the value of its own contents. Hutcheson, following Shaftesbury in his preference for intuitionism, and at the same time powerfully influenced by Butler, as Dr. Martineau points out,¹ makes the effort to seek the good of others that which alone contains moral quality, since the desire to please one's self is a natural impulse, and has no moral content. He thus declares strongly for altruism; and it deserves attention that, as he interprets moral phenomena and social life, intuitionism makes for brotherhood. Hume returns to the utilitarian theory; to avoid pain and seek pleasure, or what is agreeable to one's feelings, is that which operates towards the stability of society, only with him it is not egoism that is emphasized, but rather "sympathetic pleasure." Hume also maintains that the theory of the association of ideas accounts for many so-called moral actions. Hartley adopts the latter theory, and in his hands it is made a thorough working principle, which accounts for even more moral acts than Hume attributed to it. He does not, however, explain his position without a certain amount of logical inconsistency, since he refrains from adopting utilitarianism. On the contrary, he gives considerable prominence to Revelation, and accepts as final the dictates of moral sense. Already Butler, on intuitional grounds, had reached the same conclusions as to Revelation and conscience, though not by the same process of argument as Hartley had adopted; for, according to Butler, self-love, disinterested benevolence, and conscience, are the chief factors in social life; but

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 496.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

anticipating Hartley, and also agreeing with his conclusions, Butler lays the greatest emphasis upon conscience.

Between the time of Hume (1711-76) and that of Bentham (1748-1842), who gave to utilitarianism the completest statement it had hitherto received, distinguished German moralists appeared, who, by their writings, have influenced all subsequent ethical thought. Notable among these are Kant, b. 1724, Fichte, b. 1762, and Hegel, b. 1770. Kant frankly acknowledges how much he had been influenced by Hume's writings, though, as the result showed, it was chiefly in a negative manner. Kant could not accept Hume's postulate that self-love and sympathy explain all moral actions. The facts of conscience do not fit into this postulate; and, therefore, Kant held that moral law is independent of our sentient experience, and that transcendental ideas are legitimate postulates of reason. For Kant the claims of morality necessitate belief in the reality of an ideal world, while at the same time the court of appeal, in the case of any given moral act, is within a man's own breast. Conscience is supreme. Thus Kant fell back upon subjectivism. Previous thinkers, such as Spinoza and Leibnitz had, as Kant maintained, failed to find a basis for morals and for society. Spinoza had reduced the distinctions expressed by the terms *good*, *evil*, *personality*, to mere illusions. These terms, according to Spinoza, have a meaning only where knowledge is limited and power finite, but in reality the things which they are assumed to represent have no separate existence. Leibnitz adopted a theory the very opposite

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of this, but he made evil nothing more than a defect, an error ; and though he gave to ethics an altruistic tendency, his theories could not satisfy Kant, who strenuously maintained that conscience is sovereign, and always speaks with authority. Its dictates, however, have as their final object not merely the individual but the State, and through it the well-being of man as such. Fichte followed Kant, and still further developed subjectivism. The sensuous and moral worlds, according to Fichte, are in direct antithesis ; a subjective interpretation can alone effect a reconciliation ; the moral ideal is to strive after realizing one's destiny, and this again gives rise to development. This conception of development is Fichte's special contribution to ethics. Hegel makes a still further advance towards a fully developed doctrine of idealism. True ethics is, according to Hegel, the objectification of the Divine in the human. The historical development of the Absolute implies definite steps or stages. These, however, are not separate units, but parts of a whole. Ethics is one of three stages towards absolute knowledge, and is preceded by consciousness and self-consciousness, and succeeded by religion, of which it is independent. The natural and spiritual are stages in the same process. The moral world is a sphere within which the rational is the real. Conscience is the highest principle in morality. It is its animating spirit ; but the universal world-reason is the ultimate source of morality. Individuals share this universal world-reason. Their experience is, however, defective. Individual morality, indeed, rests only on a subjective obligation. Ethical necessity obtains fully within the

THE ETHICAL BASIS

family, the community, and the State. The State is, therefore, all-important, and morality, rightly understood, is social, communal, and is only fully realized in the State.

Hegel was essentially a moderating influence between opposing schools. The supreme place he assigned to Reason enabled him to discover the unity which reconciles all differences. Kant and Fichte, for instance, had emphasized subjectivism. Schelling, on the other hand, returned to, and laid stress upon, objectivism. Hegel declared for his doctrine of Identity; nature is Idea, but only an inadequate phenomenon of reason. Hegel's doctrine thus prepared the way for Schleiermacher who, on the basis of the identity of subject and object, formulated his theory of the Kingdom of God as that which is to be realized on earth, and is concerned with all departments of life—art, science, conduct, etc. Again, as an illustration of Hegel's mediating influence, his theory of society may be cited. Spinoza, by adopting pantheistic premisses had practically destroyed personality, and absorbed the individual in the whole; and Schelling, on the other hand, had emphasized individuality. Hegel mediates between these opponents, and while he holds that the individual has his place, and shares in the benefits of the world-wide reason, the sphere of right, within which ethical powers obtain, is in his judgment the all-embracing social relationships that are embodied in the rational State. Hegel had his defects. Like all other thinkers, even the greatest, his theories bore a certain relation to his times. Witness his finding in the changing political condi-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

tions of his day the successive ideals of the State.¹ But these defects apart, Hegel, by setting up high ideals, and making use of all that is good in opposing theories, has powerfully influenced thought and made for reconciliation. He prepared the way, as we have seen, for Schleiermacher. Rothe also owes much to him, for his theory of society is in its main features that of Schleiermacher, only with him the Church ought to be resolved into the State.

A considerable time elapsed before Continental thought told upon the ethical ideas of society that were entertained by British writers.² Within recent years Kantian and Hegelian conceptions have been abundantly reproduced. We shall see in a little how much modern idealism owes to Kant and Hegel; but meantime we continue our review of the history of British ethics. Notwithstanding the decided attitude adopted both by Butler and Hartley—the two most original thinkers of their age—the general drift of thought was towards utilitarianism; and when afterwards Bentham undertook the task of giving to the doctrine of utility a consistent and philosophical setting, he did much to make the work of subsequent

¹ "As a youth Hegel had shared the revolutionary views of Rousseau and Fichte; then came a later time, when he, like Schelling, could characterize the Emperor as 'the world-soul.' He advanced beyond both, and the period of the restoration, of which his first lecture delivered in Heidelberg almost serves as a schedule, appeared to him as the highest approximation of the State that had as yet been attained." Erdmann, *Op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 693.

² English ethical systems, "from Hobbes downwards, have been of essentially native growth, showing hardly any traces of foreign influence." Professor Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 257.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

advocates of the doctrine comparatively easy. Even Stuart Mill is greatly indebted to him. Indeed Mill only developed Bentham's postulates, adding, of course, the results of subtle analysis to Bentham's positions. The service, however, which the latter rendered was not marked by logical consistency, for he broke away from pure psychological hedonism, when, in a manner more emphatic than that which characterized Hobbes, he insisted upon administrative control on the part of the State. In this, too, Mill followed Bentham, but he went further than any of his utilitarian predecessors, for in his later works Mill, as we shall afterwards see, not only insisted upon State control, but upon it as under socialistic direction. In another respect Bentham failed to do justice to his own theory, for he did not perceive so clearly as Locke previously and Bain subsequently did, that control by the State is not enough, and that social approbation or disapprobation must be taken into account.

But apart from these things, Bentham maintained in the strongest terms that "the happiness of the individuals of whom a community is composed, that is, their pleasure and their security, is the end, and the sole end, which the legislator ought to have in view.¹ In what way this may be accomplished is, however, the *crux* of the question, and certainly, with all his acumen, Bentham does not solve the problem. The rock upon which Locke, Hume, and others stumbled lay as a barrier in his way, and beyond it he could not pass without surrendering all that he professed to hold; for when the good of others

¹ Vide *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ch. iii. s. 1.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

is made the end of human action, and that through which the highest good of the individual is secured, the ethical foundation is neither psychological egoism nor utilitarianism. It is not, indeed, selfishness in any form, but its opposite, altruism; and with this conclusion before us, the judgment of Mr. Leslie Stephen is readily endorsed when he says that, "if consistently applied, utilitarianism seems irrevocably committed to a stereotyped and unprogressive ideal."¹

VII

Within recent years the teachings of the Kanto-Hegelian philosophy have been extensively adopted. Utilitarianism, indeed, finds some of its strongest opponents among idealists. It has, therefore, now to reckon not only with intuitionists, but also with them. On the other hand, evolutionary ethics has, to a large extent, adopted utilitarianism. Evolutionary ethics has much that is distinctive of itself, but it is more closely allied to the doctrine of utility than to anything else. According to it the useful is the moral. The great ethical question of the day, then, is that which is raised by the claims of evolution; and since it occupies such a commanding place, it will be necessary to give special attention to its claims. This we shall do in another chapter. For the present we are concerned with stating the ethical doctrine of idealists; and, as already said, this owes much to German moralists. Idealism does not directly

¹ *Science of Ethics*, p. 363.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

contradict intuitionism; it regards the latter as true so far, but, as an interpretation of moral phenomena, defective. Its fundamental starting-point is that it lays emphasis upon the rational side of man's being. Self-consciousness is that which differentiates man from animals. It is "the ultimate reality of things." The speculations of Fichte and Schelling, says Professor Edward Caird, "made it manifest that the idealism of Kant could be maintained only if self-consciousness were found to be a principle adequate to the interpretation of that which is the very opposite of self-consciousness, *i.e.*, only if spirit could be shown to be the *reason* of nature, and mind to be the key to matter."¹ Again, he says, "As the lightning sleeps in the dew-drop, so in the simple and transparent unity of self-consciousness there is held in equilibrium that vital antagonism of opposites which, as the opposition of thought and things, of mind and matter, of spirit and nature, seems to rend the world asunder."² Reason is superior to mere appetite, which it modifies, and contains within itself infinite potentialities. The mind is constantly striving after the realization of itself. The differences which mental and material phenomena present are resolved by it into a unity. Present attainments are the best prophecies of better things to come. The history of past endeavours towards improving self and society tells of progress towards the ideal, and that progress, again, is a pledge of still further possible advances. For man and society there is no finality; at least the

¹ *Philosophical Classics*, Hegel, p. 132.

² *Ibid.* p. 149.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

content of the highest stage in personal attainments and social life cannot be explained. In two notable passages Mr. Green shows what are the distinctive features of idealism. *First*, so far as the individual is concerned, he says the ultimate good is "to think of an intrinsically desirable form of conscious life"; and this thought implies "the full realization of the capacities of the human soul, of the fulfilment of man's vocation, as of that in which alone he can satisfy himself."¹ *Second*, as to human society, "it is," he says, "essentially a society of self-determined persons"; and he adds, "there can be no progress of society which is not a development of capacities on the part of persons composing it, considered as ends in themselves."²

When one remembers the distinguished thinkers who have adopted idealism, criticism of their ethical theory must be made with great deference. It may, however, be permissible to say that their interpretation of moral phenomena is not free from difficulties. Their postulates are, for instance, not easier of acceptance than those of intuitionists. Take one or two illustrations. Thus, to postulate an ideal still afar off, and whose content cannot yet be explained since it is not attained, an ideal after which men and society are striving, is not more credible than to postulate the categorical imperative of Reason or that of Conscience. Again, the demands made on behalf of intuitionism are not greater than those made on behalf of idealism, when the latter affirms either that the good will is the one unconditional will, or

¹ *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 415.

² *Ibid.* p. 295.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

that the end of life is the realization of the faculties of self-conscious man as one of many self-conscious men in whom the Universal Reason is reproduced. Further, to say that "the great ideal realities of life"¹ are better expressed in terms of an *end* which is given in self-consciousness than in those of moral Law, which is held to be intuitively apprehended, does not present a simpler alternative. Or, if we take one of the objections most frequently urged against intuitionism, the path of idealism is seen to be not quite so free from obstacles as is often imagined. Thus, it is said that there are many occasions when *feeling* and *judgment* run counter to each other, and that, therefore, the dictates of conscience are uncertain; but to urge this objection is to set aside the conclusions of all recent psychologists, who rightly maintain that the mind which *thinks* and *judges* is also that which *feels*. The objection, indeed, assumes a dualism within the sphere of the *voûs*. The controversy, it may be noted, between intuitionists who lay stress on *thought*, and idealists who lay emphasis on *will*, has recently given place to the question, whether generalizations legitimately drawn from psychological analysis do not entitle, and indeed require, us to deal with the mind as a unity, *thought*, *feeling* and *will* being its mere "faculties"? If this question be answered in the affirmative, then ethics has a new task. It is no longer the task of directing attention to one "faculty" as the "predominant partner"; it is not even the effort to find, as Professor J. Seth

¹ The expression is Professor R. Wallace's, *Philosophical Classics*, Kant, p. 213.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

attempts, the ethics of personality "in the correlation of thought and feeling,"¹ or as Professor Laurie tries, the authority for moral distinctions in Will-reason;² but rather to discover in the correlation of *thought*, *will*, and *feeling*, that is, in the mind itself, the seat of personality and moral actions.

We do not offer these criticisms upon idealism with any other object than to show that it is not free from difficulties. Any ethical theory which deals with mental phenomena must contain things hard to understand. This is true of intuitionism as it is of idealism; but there is a great difference as to the nature and character of the difficulties that are encountered when an ethical theory, based on the testimony of the mind, is contrasted with one based on nature or custom; and it is this difference which at once creates a great gap between idealism and intuitionism on the one hand, and utilitarianism and evolutionary ethics on the other. Idealists and intuitionists have much in common. The former accept the testimony of conscience to a certain extent, though they do not regard law as defining the *end* of life. The historical roots of their ethical theory, too, can be traced back to Kant, who declared emphatically for the categorical imperative of Reason; but in the final analysis of the terms Reason and Conscience, there is not the antagonism which at one time was assumed to exist between them. The moral law is metaphorically said to be written on the mind; the mind is that which thinks, judges, and

¹ *Ethical Principles*, p. 213.

² *Ethics of Reason*, pp. 75 *et seq.*

THE ETHICAL BASIS

feels, and moral responsibility is attached to it. Moreover, the *end* which idealists hold to be given in self-consciousness is intuitively perceived; and in this respect likewise idealists and intuitionists may be regarded as standing on common ground. Cudworth was an idealist, but he also held by intuition.¹ There are, it is true, differences between them, but these are not greater than those which obtain between intuitionists, whether of the intellectual or of the emotional school, who maintain that the moral law in itself is a sufficient guide, and Christian moralists who, while holding by intuitionism, yet rightly contend that, sin being a grave fact in human life, man stands in need of the Divine grace, which Jesus Christ imparts to all who ask it; for not otherwise than by Divine grace can man attain to the highest life. He needs, as Christianity clearly teaches, Divine aid, and this aid Divine love provides and offers in forgiveness, sonship, and life eternal. The Christian who holds by these truths is enabled to perceive that the moral law is not enough, and he is differentiated from the man who stakes everything upon that law. In making these statements we are not commending or preaching Christianity. That may be done on other occasions. Meanwhile, we are only taking note of facts which belong to human experience, and have inspired many of the noblest lives that have ever been lived. We repeat, therefore, the statement that the idealist is not further removed from the intuitionist than is the intuitionist who is also a Christian from the mere moralist

¹ *Vide* p. 107 and p. 110.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

who contends that the moral law is sufficient in itself to show one how he can attain to the highest existence.

From what has been stated it will now be seen that there always have been, and still are, two great classes of moralists who have attempted to explain the individual life, and the constitution of society by means of ethical postulates which are wide as the poles asunder. Intuitionists and idealists have their differences. No one acquainted with the history of ethics can overlook that fact ; but the former, whether they base their ethics on intellectual or sentimental grounds, agree with the latter in this, that they investigate the contents of consciousness ; they begin from *within*. Utilitarians, whether they hold by hedonism or eudæmonism, and the advocates of evolutionary ethics agree in this, that they deal with external nature and custom ; they begin from *without*. The members of the one class either hear a Divine voice urging them to duty, or see a high ideal which lures them on to service. The clearest-sighted of them, penetrating beneath the surface of things, find unifying principles which belong to the moral order of the universe, and are the expressions of the Will of the highest Wisdom and Universal Reason. They cannot, however, profess to interpret all social phenomena, or find a solution for all life's perplexing questions ; but for them human life is not a hap-hazard affair, neither is man the sport of Fate. On the contrary, all things animate and inanimate are under the direction of a Divine Purpose, the Author of which is never really obliged to retrace

THE ETHICAL BASIS

His steps, but is always working steadily towards a definite goal.¹ The members of the other class regard either pleasure or happiness as the end of life. Society is only a means towards either of these ends, and beyond—all is a blank. But these have also a gospel, though it does not claim to throw light upon the great future. Barbarities have been abolished, and the barriers of prejudice broken down by "the efforts of men in whom a higher sense of rights and duties was aroused, and through whom the general moral tone was advanced." This heightened tone "is due to the progress of science," meaning by that term "not merely knowledge of the operations of nature, but knowledge of human life as affected by diverse causes, and of the community of blood in all mankind." Sin is "an imperfect sense of the true proportion of things," and the remedy for moral ills is to observe the relation between cause and effect. Lack of imagination accounts for want of sympathy, which "is essential to the unselfish life"; but, again, the remedy is easily found, for suppress the "over-self," and you remove "the terrible mass of wrong-doing." All moral sanctions are rooted in that which, "after ages of dearly bought experience, has proved itself to be the best for man," whose "capacity can never overtake his loftiest ideals," which, again, "are spurs to their pursuit."² This is the gospel which lifts "the dead weight of

¹ We are aware that there are idealists who think they see in evolution a manifestation of the principle on which morality depends. *Vide* W. R. Sorley's *Ethics of Naturalism*, p. 291.

² *Vide The Story of Creation*, by Edward Clodd, pp. 221-3.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

care " from the heart of man and inspires him with new energy. It would be unfair to criticise this gospel before we have considered more fully the claims of evolutionary ethics; but it may here be noted that even those who are most willing to put themselves in the position of its advocates, and so try to do it justice, cannot help asking, Whence come rights and duties, if within the moral sphere the relentless laws of natural causation and "the survival of the fittest" hold good? and whence man's high ideals, if they are not given in self-consciousness which differentiates man from animals, and cannot be explained unless on the assumption that there has been "a break," as Mr. Russel Wallace allows, in the evolutionary process, or, as Mr. Huxley says, an entrance of the ethical into the cosmic process? We shall have occasion to examine the issues raised by these questions when we consider evolutionary ethics. It is sufficient here to say again that the fundamental distinctions to which reference has been made have constantly presented themselves whenever ethical problems have been raised; and that, while great variety of opinion has obtained among moralists, they are divided into two opposing camps that have little in common, the one finding an interpretation of moral phenomena and social relationships *without*, and the other *within* themselves; the one in *matter*, the other in *spirit*.

VIII

From what has been stated we now make the important deduction that, to a great extent, ethical

THE ETHICAL BASIS

theories are relative to the times in which they are held. They reflect as in a mirror the spirit of the times. Moods and tenses of thought and feeling play upon them and are reproduced in creed-form. Your conception of the world largely determines your ethics: if pantheistic, the individual is lost in the whole, and rights and duties lose their personal elements; if subjective, the individual receives great prominence, and conscience becomes supreme; if the world is regarded as the creation of a Creative Mind, ethical power embodied in the moral law utters itself in imperatives, and so on throughout the wide field of human thought, of experience, and of speculation, conceptions of the world reproduce themselves in corresponding ethical theories.

It becomes, therefore, an absorbingly interesting question how far the *Zeitgeist* has determined ethical tendencies. The history of British ethics affords the fullest display of the influence of the spirit of the times. Thus, generally speaking, it will, on investigation, be discovered that utilitarianism, in one or other of its forms, has had for most minds a strong fascination during periods when a cold and lifeless conservatism prevailed in Church and State. When, for instance, Hobbes (1588-1679) revived the questions which Greek moralists had discussed, and declared for egoism *plus* State control, the times did not provide conditions favourable for the propagation of his theories. He wrote during a period when intense excitement obtained in Church and State, and when, therefore, the selfish and calculating spirit which egoism begets could have little chance of

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

becoming the rule of life. Witness the religious controversies which issued in the second Reformation in Scotland (1638), and the Westminster Assembly in England (1644-47). Fuller (1608-61) and Gurnal (1617-79), Baxter (1615-91) and Charnock (1628-80) had touched the religious susceptibilities of the people, and had awakened them out of a deep religious slumber. Great political changes had also taken place at this time. The age of Cromwell and Milton was one of political enthusiasm, and it is therefore little wonder that Hobbes had few followers. It needed the atmosphere created by the reaction which set in after the religious and political excitement had abated, to enable Hume (1711-76) to advocate with any measure of success utilitarian principles; but even in his case the progress which religious and political discussion always secures obliged him to make an advance upon the view held and advocated by Hobbes. Hume's theory of "sympathetic pleasure" and that of "association of ideas" mark the advance he made.

The interpretation of ethical history would be incomplete were it not pointed out that the conditions which made Hobbes' work difficult rendered that of Cudworth (1617-88) and More (1614-87), the distinguished Cambridge moralists, comparatively easy. With singular freshness they discussed the questions which, a century later, the Scottish school, of which Reid and Dugald Stewart were the chief ornaments, also discussed. They contended for an objective standard to which questions of right and wrong must be referred; they held, at the same time, that the

THE ETHICAL BASIS

dictates of enlightened conscience are supreme, and that knowledge of moral distinctions is innate. But immediately after the time of the Cambridge moralists a political and religious reaction set in. Locke, who belongs to the transition period, finely represents the spirit of the time. He does not hold by Hobbes, but neither does he go with those who maintain that ideas are innate; and if he is the founder of English empiricism, he is also one of the earliest advocates of radicalism, as is witnessed by his theory of labour as that which alone gives a title to hold land. Locke, indeed, reflects the spirit of his age.

When we approach the next period, the influence of the times on ethics receives a signal illustration. The reaction had not been very thorough. Enthusiasm had, it is true, largely died out, but there still remained a considerable amount of religious vitality. The atmosphere of the time favoured discussion, but not fierce antagonism. The disputants also were equally divided, and, we may add, equally well matched. A spirit of compromise, therefore, began to manifest itself. This was what a clear-sighted psychologist of the day might have anticipated. The spirit of compromise reflected itself in the writings of Butler (1692-1752) and Hartley (1705-57), who, while opposing the views of Locke and Hume, nevertheless made large concessions to their opponents.

At a still later period Reid (1710-96) and Stewart (1752-1828) represented a counter reaction, for they led ethical discussion back to the claims of the moral law, at a time when the first signs were seen of that

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

great and powerful politico-religious movement which continued for years afterwards to beat and pulsate throughout all Europe, and issued at length in the French Revolution, and in drastic political and religious changes in all European countries. The conditions obtaining at the beginning of the present century were not favourable for new departures in ethics. The fears to which the French Revolution had given birth awoke strong conservative tendencies, and after the Peace of 1815, the people lapsed into indifference. But the intellectual forces which had been set in motion by the Revolution were not really stopped, they were only checked for a time. Indeed, they soon began again to manifest themselves in religious controversies, such as the Tractarian Movement in England, and the Ten Years' Conflict in Scotland; in intense political discussions which issued in the passing of Reform Bills; in the raising of social questions to which the most earnest and capable thinkers of the century have given special attention; and in the statement and defence of those ethical theories the chief features of which we have already examined.

With the latter we are only meantime concerned. Whewell on the one side, and Stuart Mill on the other, represented for a period opposing schools. But the study of German thought and the remarkable advance of physical science soon brought idealism and evolutionary ethics into the field. These claim to offer a satisfactory explanation of the ethical foundation of society. The old question as to how far ethical theories are determined by environment

THE ETHICAL BASIS

presses, therefore, for an answer to-day with more insistence than on any previous occasion. The complexity of modern life, the rapidity with which communications are made between one part of the world and another, the intensity with which social questions are considered, the wave of negative thought which has passed over all Europe, and the disintegration, doubt and unrest which are the "notes" of our time, all produce subtle and powerful influences which, with more or less distinctness, are reflected in the ethical theories of the day. Ethical sanction is, for example, at the present time sought for the doctrine of *laissez faire*, for the claims of socialism, and for the fierce competition of our time; and according as a person approves of one or other of these he reads them into his ethics. Unconsciously, perhaps, yet nevertheless really, his environment tells upon his ethics.

Whatever judgment may be formed regarding these phenomena—and our review of ethical history shows that they have been seen at all times—they cannot be regarded as mere hap-hazard coincidences. They demand, and in our opinion are susceptible of, a rational interpretation, for in the moral as in the material world laws operate with uniformity. When, therefore, a right historical perspective is obtained and the ethical theories that have been propounded are taken as the sum of human efforts to explain the ethical foundation of society, then is there much to justify the conclusions—*first*, that the economic and political, the spiritual and material, are constantly acting and reacting upon each other; and *second*, that the atmo-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

sphere thus created, and which we breathe, goes a long way to determine our ethical standpoint. If human life, for instance, is conceived as far transcending the things we see and handle, if its infinite value is apprehended, and we have present to our minds its weighty obligations as well as its great privileges, its duties as well as its rights, it becomes almost impossible for us to rest satisfied with a theory which attributes all phenomena to the cosmic process, or with that which explains moral distinctions by eudæmonistic or hedonistic principles. And, again, if those moral ideals which make for brotherhood, and contain within themselves that which promises the regeneration and reorganization of human society, are to us great truths which we cherish, it is equally impossible to be content with a theory which, eliminating the Divine Purpose, traces all things back to mechanical processes and natural causation, or with that which attributes all human action to prudential considerations. The last word has not yet been spoken for idealism, and there is much in it which no thinker can easily set aside. It makes, however, great demands; for in making the standard of morality an end which is described as "an ideal of self,"¹ or in saying that self-realization is "no mere individual end," and that the first law of morality is "the sublation of that distinction between the particular ego and other individuals" which admits of the "one using the others as mere means to his own advancement,"² is to make statements which strong faith alone can

¹ J. H. Muirhead, *The Elements of Ethics*, p. 164.

² W. R. Sorley, *Ethics of Naturalism*, p. 289.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

grasp. With abundant justification it may be maintained that the moral law given in the constitution of our nature—for “our nature is not morally blank, but pervaded with an ethical consciousness throughout”¹—and obeyed not in a legal spirit, but in the spirit which the consciousness of brotherhood inspires, is far more credible, and sets up the ideal of personal, disinterested, and self-sacrificing service as that through which society is destined to be regenerated and ultimately established on a firm foundation.

¹ Dr. Martineau, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 218.

IV

The Ethical Basis of Society

EVOLUTIONARY AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I

THERE are good reasons for believing that the ethical theory which is likely to offer the most strenuous resistance to Christian ethics, and, indeed, to all that Christianity implies, is the evolutionary. We purpose, therefore, to examine the basis and content of evolutionary and Christian ethics, and, when this is accomplished, to inquire what ends and ideas each respectively sets up both for the individual and society.

A wide gulf separates the advocates of these ethical theories. The evolutionist derives moral distinctions from unmoral phenomena. Human life, with all its infinite moral and spiritual potentialities, is, in his view, only the last product of a long series of physical changes. That which we term moral is merely the expression of the content of one of the latest developments in the evolution of life. Society is an organism; it is an end unto itself, and its function, according to

THE ETHICAL BASIS

Professor Giddings, "is to develop conscious life and to create human personality; to that end it now exists."¹ "The moral sense," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, "is a product of the social factor,"² and Mr. Spencer traces moral consciousness to the same source.³ The individual is a member of the social organism; for him there is no objective moral law the dictates of which almost all men recognise, whether they obey them or not. The only valid rule of conduct for the individual, according to the evolutionary theory, is to pursue that which makes for the maximum of agreeable feelings. The pleasurable is the good. Pleasure, however, is not to be limited to mere physical feeling; it means also whatever gives satisfaction to the mind. All things, therefore, which make for a balance of the agreeable as against the unpleasant are to be sought, and the value of conduct is to be thus estimated. It may be here noted that since evolution claims to have gone beyond empiricism and to have set morality on a rational, or, as Mr. Spencer says, on a scientific basis, its claims can scarcely be allowed, for so long as pleasure is made the rule of conduct the basis of morality is empirical. You cannot find a scientific basis for morality so long as, on the one hand, you overlook the impulses and desires which psychology

¹ *The Principles of Sociology*, p. 420. Professor Giddings says, "If society is an organism at all, it must be described as psychosocial—as a psychic organism essentially, but with a physical basis." He prefers, however, to speak of society as "an organization partly as a product of unconscious evolution, partly as a result of conscious planning."

² *Science of Ethics*, p. 372.

³ *Data of Ethics*, p. 120.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

shows always precede feelings of satisfaction, or, on the other hand, take no account of the fact that the highest forms of life are not invariably accompanied with a maximum of agreeable feelings. There is, indeed, no more "science" in such efforts to explain moral actions than there would be in an effort to work out a mathematical problem if at the same time the axioms of the science of mathematics were overlooked. If, however, impulses and desires, instincts and sentiments be taken into account, as Mr. Spencer has recently claimed to have done,¹ or if the highest life be thought of apart from the amount of happiness that is in it, then, in both instances, pleasure ceases to be the rule of conduct; for in the one case desires, impulses, etc., are regulated not by considerations of happiness, but by the objects which evoke them; and in the other, the end or goal after which men strive gives character and value to the highest life.

Evolutionary ethics, while dealing with the individual, deals with him as a member of society. It claims to contain altruistic as well as egoistic sanctions; and how it passes from the one to the other deserves careful attention. "The struggle for existence" or "the survival of the fittest" might seem to exclude even the possibility of altruism. But no; for just as, according to Mr. Spencer, without egoistic activities, "the results of social evolution, under one of its aspects," could never have arisen, so without "altruistic activities there never could have arisen, and cannot further arise, certain higher results of social evolution."² How then are egoistic and altru-

¹ *Various Fragments*, pp. 120, 121.

² *Ibid.* p. 121.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

istic activities connected the one with the other? Is the passage from the one to the other based on empiricism or science? Now, observe that, according to evolutionary ethics, whatever ministers to the happiness of the individual is the rule of conduct, and that whatever preserves and enlarges life, first as individuals, and next as members of society, is the end that is to be kept in view. Whatever makes for pleasure is right, whatever issues in pain is wrong. The moral is only an evolution of the physical, and still bears traces of it. Study nature and mark how, as some hold, by *natural selection*, or as others contend, by *the survival of the fittest*, species are developed, and you have the ultimate explanation of the complex phenomena of life, physical and moral, individual and social. The most primitive sensory phenomena contain the germs of the future highest developments, and are prophecies of what nature shall produce. Each stage is higher and better than that which precedes it. The process goes on apace. Ultimately sympathy and altruistic feelings are developed. People living in clans or tribes recognise the need of mutual aid, or consciousness of kind draws them together. The benefits which are mutually given and enjoyed tell also upon future generations; for habits formed transmit themselves to posterity, and in course of time these assume the form of intuitions; they are not really innate, but they are so deeply embedded in human nature that they can be spoken of as intuitions. As "the intuition of space possessed by any living individual" has arisen from organized and consolidated experience

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of all antecedent individuals, who bequeathed to him their slowly developed nervous organization," so moral intuitions have a similar origin and history.¹ The person who has not been trained in the evolutionary school may attribute moral distinctions to idealism, or to intellectual intuition, or to the emotional element in man, or, as most people unthinkingly do, to One who is said to be the Sovereign Lawgiver, and is further alleged to have written His law on the human heart; but all these are mistaken, and especially the latter, who are, however, to be pitied rather than blamed, for superstition has played havoc with them, and their so-called religion is only a form of it. The fact, however, remains: man is the crowning product of nature's efforts, and "the subject matter of ethics" is that "form which universal conduct assumes during the last stages of its evolution";² for, according to Mr. Spencer, evolution "has been, and is still, working towards the highest life," and by "conforming to those principles by which the highest life is achieved" laws of conduct are ascertained; obeying these laws, the end is reached "towards which the Power manifested throughout Evolution works."³

II

If the important questions be pressed, What is the source of these laws? and Whence the authority that

¹ Mr. Spencer's letter in Professor Bain's *Mental and Moral Science*, p. 722.

² *Data of Ethics*, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.* p. 171.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

enforces obedience to them? the former is answered by Mr. Leslie Stephen, who maintains that they have grown out of "certain instincts," such as reverence for social welfare; and the latter by Mr. Spencer, who says that habits in course of time assume the form of laws to which men, for the sake of the amount of agreeable feelings which they yield, render willing obedience. The individual submits to these laws because he perceives that they secure his highest good. Society is an end unto itself, but it is also, and chiefly, that through which the individual obtains the greatest amount of happiness. Hence the transition from the egoistic to the altruistic. Care must, therefore, be given to society. Whatever ministers to its efficiency must have attention. Morality, indeed, in its last analysis, according to evolutionary ethics, is that which conduces to the *health* or *preservation* or *increase of life*, or *development* of the social organism.

But surely this is essentially empiricism, and to define morality in this manner is to establish it not on a scientific, but on an empirical basis. The conduct which is thus inculcated is hedonistic; and though it may seem satisfactory to the evolutionist, the highest forms of life cannot be guaranteed by hedonism. The question, however, which evolutionary ethics raises in dealing with the individual and society has the capital advantage of being quite definite. It is, whether evolution applied to ethics gives a rational and satisfactory explanation of human life, and a sufficient basis for ethical relationships. The stupendous postulate upon which evolutionary ethics rests

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

is that all phenomena are developments of a universal law which governs alike the minutest atoms and human thought; but here it needs to be stated with emphasis that evolution has not been proved throughout. In the sphere of physical science the very utmost that can be said is, that many facts seem to substantiate it. No informed person will, however, commit himself to the statement that the evolutionist's hypothesis has been absolutely demonstrated in all departments of life, physical, mental, and moral. The conception has a fascination for many, and its growing popularity is undoubted; but if history teaches inquirers anything at all, it is that these very things ought to suggest caution. Besides, evolutionists are far from agreeing among themselves. This we have already seen in discussing their psychological postulates, and their disagreement is further illustrated in the controversies of the day.

Thus, in a contribution to the *Nineteenth Century*,¹ Mr. Spencer, criticising Lord Salisbury's Presidential Address to the British Association at Oxford in 1894, substitutes his theory of *the survival of the fittest* for Mr. Darwin's theory of *natural selection*. But Mr. Darwin is generally held to have established the doctrine of evolution. If any person speaks of the theory, he speaks of Darwinism, and this at least expresses the popular opinion, which, again, goes a long way to determine popular beliefs. If, however, Mr. Spencer can, with the approval of some evolutionists, set aside the Darwinian hypothesis, which many other evolutionists accept, and can insist

¹ November, 1895.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

upon another theory that is also radically different, evolution manifestly suffers at the hands of its chief exponents; and that additional circumstance ought surely to suggest hesitation. But the absence of caution, and the danger which always accompanies such absence, are quite distinct notes of the discussion going on. We shall see in a moment how hasty inferences, drawn from a popular theory, have in one remarkable historical instance wrought mischief. Meanwhile we notice the Duke of Argyle's criticism of Mr. Spencer's latest contribution.¹ The Duke submits Mr. Spencer's contention to a careful analysis, and ultimately concludes that the term *development* really covers and explains all that science has indubitably proven. In his judgment, the facts of the material world cannot be understood apart from creative acts. "All our desperate attempts," he says, "to get rid of the idea of creation as distinguished from mere procreation are self-condemned as futile. The facts of Nature and the necessities of thought compel us to entertain the conception of the absolute beginning of organic life, when as yet there were no parent forms to breed and multiply." But if all the objections which the Duke of Argyle marshals against evolution could be satisfactorily disposed of, which, however, is doubtful, there would still remain the well-known acknowledgment of Professor Huxley—to which we shall refer in a little—to be explained away, that the cosmic process has been deeply and profoundly affected by an ethical process, or, as

¹ The *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1897.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Professor Giddings allows, "the ethical spirit which corrects the defects of industrial civilization."

The theory of evolution has, however, been applied to morals, notwithstanding the difficulties which it encounters in the physical sphere. Those who thus apply evolution also maintain that it alone can explain all religious phenomena. Both of these things are done, and that, too, at a time when history has clearly uttered a significant word of warning, viz., that whenever a new conception is gaining hold of men's minds, then is there the greatest need for caution. It is so easy to give undue prominence to the conception, and to induce those who embrace it to discard all previous theories and interpretations. It is, therefore, possible that evolution may share the fate of the famous *argument from design*. That argument was a scientific conception before it became, in the hands of Paley, a religious one. But every person knows now the logical weakness of the argument. There was, however, a long time during which it had for many minds a fascination as strong as that which attracts men to evolution. It was extensively employed to buttress theistic beliefs and support religious claims; but the argument was pushed too far, and became so mechanical that its rejection was inevitable. Mr. Lindsay has made an admirable attempt, in his *Recent Advances in Theistic Philosophy*, to restate the teleological argument, but it has become so thoroughly discredited that, even when "organic likeness" is substituted for the older idea of mechanical design, what of truth there is in the argument is apt to be overlooked.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

Evolution may share the same fate. Like the argument from design, it too was a scientific conception before it became a working principle in the hands of moral and religious teachers. Those who have espoused evolution most enthusiastically may attempt to make it prove too much. "Evolution is not," observes Professor Alexander, "a fixed theory, not a word to conjure with, and it may be modified and is being modified every day."¹ Claims are, however, made on its behalf for which there is not anything like sufficient evidence. According to Professor Drummond, in his *Ascent of Man*, evolution is the sole method of creation, and is identical with love; but if this is held, the caustic remark of Mr. Goldwin Smith cannot be easily replied to, when he says that Providence in that case attains its end at the expense of wholesale carnage and suffering. We are far from denying the validity of the proofs urged in support of evolution in relation to the physical world. It is from the theist's point of view a conceivable process worthy of the highest Wisdom; it opens up vistas that evoke reverence and praise; but more evidence must be forthcoming before the claims made on its behalf in relation to ethics can be accepted. It is, indeed, in relation to the origin of ethical distinctions that evolution has encountered most resistance; for its advocates have been obliged to account for personality and self-consciousness, apart from which morality cannot be even conceived. How, it is asked, has personality been evolved? Whence the self-consciousness that differentiates human beings from the animal

¹ Vide *Moral Order and Progress*, by S. Alexander, p. 15.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

creation? The animal passes from stage to stage, and ultimately all its powers are developed. Man's bodily organism, too, sharing as it does the animal life, also becomes perfect, and then submits to a process of decay similar to that which takes place in the animal creation; but not so man the person; for however high his attainments, he is ever conscious that there are wider fields of knowledge to enter, vaster domains of truth to explore, and greater moral victories to be won than any yet secured. It was this "perpetual progress of the soul to its perfection" which led Addison to ask, "How can it enter the thought of man that the soul, which is capable of such immense perfections and of receiving new improvements to all eternity, shall fall away into nothing almost as soon as it is created?" Not only, however, is there a wide gulf separating man from the mere animal so far as the future is concerned, but present differences cannot be easily accounted for on evolutionary principles. The animal "lives and feels; he carries instinct forward, it may be, to the very confines of reason. But he does not comprehend his life; he does not reflect that it is he who lives; he is not conscious of remembering a line of personal existence unshared by any other being, and threading a series of years and a long train of divergent circumstances. . . . With man, the animal species, the lower nature which he shares with his kind is subordinate to the individual, because in man that which constitutes the individual, his inmost being, belongs to a separate and higher order of existence. This consciousness of life is not to be referred to any-

THE ETHICAL BASIS

thing in man's physical constitution. Thought, after all, is not merely phosphorus, and psychology is not correctly described as a branch of physiology."¹

III

To the thorough-going evolutionist these difficulties lying in the way of the adoption of his theory are not, however, insuperable. Without being uncharitable in judgment it may be said that he, with a confidence befitting one who believes himself to be the happy possessor of the final forms of truth, passes by all previous solutions of human personality that have been offered by earnest thinkers. He pays no heed to traducianism, first taught by Tertullian, and only somewhat hesitatingly rejected by Augustine on account of its tinge of materialism. He does not at all acknowledge creationism, according to which "each soul is an immediate work of the Creator." He makes, without even the sign of an effort, the great postulate that human life is only a higher development of the animal life, and that consequently morals must be physiologically interpreted. To make, however, such a postulate is not the same thing as to offer adequate proof on behalf of it. There still remain the questions: Whence comes personality? How is self-consciousness to be explained? and, What of free-will and moral accountability? It is not sufficient to attempt to place the things which these terms denote on "the discharged list of illusions." Self-consciousness cannot be denied, and "one fact

¹ *Elements of Religion*, by Canon Liddon, pp. 87-89.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

in man's nature to which consciousness plainly testifies is responsibility. This is the true index of a higher nature in man than the purely material."¹

Evolutionists are obliged to offer some explanation of these phenomena, but hitherto biological investigations have failed to account for personality, free-will, and moral responsibility. These lie beyond their ken; physio-psychology cannot submit them to experiments; and though evolution traces human life, with these its content, through innumerable gradations, "the adequate system of causation" which reason desiderates, is wanting; and therefore personality, free-will, and moral responsibility, on the hypothesis of evolution, present baffling problems. To affirm, as many evolutionists do, that personality is a creation of society, the outcome of definite social and political institutions, is a veritable *quæstio principii*; ² for society itself is yet to be accounted for. It is made up of individuals; you cannot have society apart from persons; and to say that personality is a creation of society is to leave it unexplained. Not only, therefore, is personality left without an explanation, but the end of life is a deep mystery. No light is thrown upon human life to guide the weary traveller. Sometimes it is spoken of as a glorified hedonism; at other times as the preservation of the race, as if mere existence, without respect to its ethical content, were a sufficient *terminus ad quem*.

The dissatisfaction born of this profound uncertainty has caused many thoughtful inquirers to cast

¹ *Ænigma Vitæ*, by Rev. John Wilson, p. 49.

² *Vide* p. 139.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

about for an explanation of mental and moral phenomena that is more satisfactory. Mr. Russel Wallace holds, as we have seen, that there must have been "breaks" in the evolution of life, and Mr. Huxley declares for an ethical process which had interrupted the cosmic process. He, like Mr. Spencer, had been powerfully influenced by Mr. Darwin, and had been taught to look for the operations of a common law in all phenomena. There is, however, a frankness in Mr. Huxley, and even a readiness to confess failure when facts seem to require such a confession, that one misses in Mr. Spencer. Mr. Huxley had early laid down the formula that "the molecular structure of the cosmic gas stands in the same relation to the phenomena of the world as the structure of the clock to its phenomena."¹ But in his latest production, the *Romanes Lecture*, when discussing the ethical question and reviewing all that might be said of ethics as the outcome of the cosmic process, there are acknowledgments made which have the appearance of a recantation of the earlier views he had entertained. Mr. Huxley certainly gives away much of what he had previously held and taught when he says that "cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and evil tendencies of man may have come about; but, in itself, it is incompetent to furnish any better reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil than we had before. Some day," he continues, "I doubt not we shall arrive at an understanding of the evolution of the æsthetic faculty; but all the understanding in the world will neither increase

¹ *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 63.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

nor diminish the force of the intuition that this is beautiful and that is ugly.”¹ Again, still more remarkable is the admission that “social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process, the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest in respect of the whole of the conditions which exist, but of those who are ethically the best.”²

It would be a great surprise to find Mr. Spencer making such an acknowledgment as that which Mr. Huxley has frankly made. He is too much bent upon developing ethics from biological roots to allow the introduction of a new factor; yet the confession is made by an exponent of physical science as distinguished as himself, and its importance cannot be overestimated. Mr. Spencer will concede nothing. With him natural law is supreme, and all things must be explained in its terms. The flaws in his system have not, however, escaped detection. Witness Mr. W. S. Lilley's criticism,³ and that of Professor Iverach.⁴ Even his followers do not agree with him. Mr. Leslie Stephen, for instance, while holding much in common with Mr. Spencer, does not accept the distinction elaborated in *Data of Ethics*⁵ between relative and absolute ethics; nor, again, though insisting upon “conformity to the conditions of social welfare” as the rule of moral conduct, does Mr. Stephen agree with Mr. Spencer respecting the extent to which

¹ *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 31.

² *Ibid.* p. 33.

³ *Nineteenth Century*, May and October, 1889.

⁴ *Christianity and Evolution*.

⁵ Chapter xvi.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

sociology as a science is established. Evolutionary ethics has somehow come to be associated with the name of Mr. Spencer,¹ perhaps because he has written so much in defence of it. Evolutionary ethics is, however, independent of any individual, and must be judged as a system. Its defects we have indicated. It is not free from empiricism, and empiricism cannot give sure ground on which to stand ; nor from hedonism, and hedonism cannot, for many weighty reasons already stated, be taken as the end of life. It fails also to explain personality, and therefore morality. Its ethical foundations of society are mere postulates, the verification of which has not yet been accomplished. There is all the difference which language can indicate between the interpretation of moral phenomena given by evolutionary ethics and that offered by Christianity. The reverent student of Nature and Revelation, while examining with an "open mind" all that physical science discloses of the operations of the Creative Mind, cannot assume that the moral and spiritual are mere developments of that which is unmoral and physical ; for psychology has taught him that there is a realm separate from and

¹ Mr. Spencer is jealous of the honour he claims ; and the spirit he frequently displays in combating the opinions of opponents is reflected in his treatment of such a distinguished authority as Professor Huxley, of whom he thus writes in commenting on the *Romanes Lecture* :—"It has been absurdly supposed that his lecture was, in part, an indirect criticism upon theories held by me. But this cannot be. It is scarcely supposable that he deliberately undertook to teach me *my own doctrines*, enunciated, some of them, forty odd years ago." *Various Fragments*, p. 117.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

above the material; reason, that fewest difficulties, to put it negatively, are encountered by postulating an objective authority that will explain the great ethical terms, *duty, freedom, responsibility*; and religion, that he stands in a personal relation to God, whom to obey and serve is to enjoy true liberty, and attain the realization of self.

IV

Having explained the basis and contents of evolutionary ethics, we have next to examine those of Christian ethics. Christianity does not formulate a theory of morals. Being a Revelation of the Divine Will and the Way of life, it is not concerned with theories; it makes its statements of truth and leaves the responsibility of accepting them with those who hear them. Hence, in relation to morals, it takes for granted that there is an objective standard of right to which conscience assents, not, however, always and at once; for sin, it acknowledges, is a grave fact in human life, and sin, among many other things, has had the effect of adversely affecting the testimony of conscience. It has partially destroyed conscience; for unless this be admitted, it is impossible to explain "the deliverances of conscience," which "have varied from age to age and race to race."¹ The Divine image impressed originally on man's nature has been greatly defaced by sin; enough, however, remains to bring home to him, when he does wrong,

¹ Vide *Christian Character*, by Rev. T. B. Kilpatrick, B.D. who holds by idealism, and applies it to Christian ethics, pp. 94-96.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

the fact of his wrong-doing. But about these things Christianity does not argue or theorize. It assumes that moral sentiments are more than subjective feelings; that these sentiments are moral and intellectual intuitions; and that justice can only be done, fair conditions for material and moral improvement be provided, and society rendered stable when the law of right is conformed to; for morality is obedience to this law, and makes for the good of man. We are not now concerned with the question how Christianity, with its distinctive gospel of grace, shows the way of life and transforms ethics by its doctrine of love. That we shall consider when dealing with the Religious Basis of Society; but meantime we point out that Christianity takes for granted that there is in every man, in the savage and philosopher alike, that which witnesses to an objective moral order,¹ to infringe which is to entail moral loss and incur liability to punishment; for the plain man of the street and the thoughtful recluse know themselves responsible for their action to One who has established a moral government in the world. Conscience speaks for God, calls attention to the Divine will, bears testimony to the sacredness of the moral law, warns against transgressions of that law, and gives its approval to all who are obedient.

¹ "This positive law of duty is, in the Christian ethics, connected with a personal Law-giver, revealed to conscience. Christianity does not attempt to prove this; it merely asserts it. It appeals to it as a fact which can be experimentally known, the intuition of the unsophisticated heart." *The Christian Ethic*, by Professor Knight, p. 53.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

But further, Christianity rests its message on the moral content of that which is commanded or promised. Unless, then, man is endowed with moral intuitions it is difficult to perceive how he can respond to the Divine will. These intuitions may be blurred by sin, but they must be there in some form, otherwise there is neither a basis for duty nor that which can allow God to begin a gracious work within us, the effect of which is that,—

“Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.”

It is true that Christianity makes use of the supernatural, but the mighty deeds of Christ were never performed apart from an ethical purpose. His miracles were not mere displays of power, never prodigies of strength; they were always wrought for a moral end. Hence they are never spoken of as wonders only; they are called “signs and wonders,” prominence being thus given, in the most emphatic manner, to their ethical import. As a fact in the history of ethics, it is worthy of note that Shaftesbury was the first in modern times to point out that the moral truths of Christianity were its chief recommendation to acceptance. Recently Archbishop Trench, in his work on *Miracles*, gives prominence to the truth that Christ did not in the first instance appeal to His hearers on the ground of supernatural deeds. His words preceding His works, He first addressed the moral and spiritual faculties of men, and appealed to them for a response to the saving truths He uttered. Miracles came next, and were intended to confirm what had already been acknowledged: they were re-

THE ETHICAL BASIS

demption in act, and worthy Him who "came to seek and save." Professor Bruce has rendered signal service in elucidating this same method of procedure; and in his treatment of the miracles of Christ they are not regarded as mere displays of strength, but as illustrations of the ethical side of the redemptive Purpose.

Difference of opinion, however, prevails as to what is in man to whom Christ made His appeals; and the question has again and again been discussed as to what is the content of His moral nature. The advocate of evolutionary ethics has, it is true, no interest in this question; and the hedonist finds no place for it in his syllabus; but for idealists and intuitionists it has a great value. Many who fervently hold by the gospel of the kingdom of God as that which inspires man with a deathless hope, and opens up for the race a bright future, maintain that idealism is most in keeping with Christianity. They find in self-consciousness "the idea of an absolute should be";¹ this is their starting point; next they discover a contradiction and opposition between aspirations after high ideals and the sensuous side of their nature, and for an explanation of this opposition they fall back upon the Platonic conception of identity, and the Hegelian theory of a unity which is profounder and deeper than all differences and oppositions. For them, further, actions are not regulated by *law*, but by an *end* which, they say, is reached only when man's faculties are fully developed in a social State.

¹ In its last analysis it is difficult to distinguish "the idea of absolute should be" from intuitive perceptions.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

There seems to be good reason for holding that Plato indistinctly anticipated the teachings of St. Paul,¹ otherwise neo-Platonism cannot be understood. In the light which Christianity shed across life's mysteries it is not wonderful that Hegel should have had recourse to his theory of unity underlying all differences ;² but whether idealism, which owes so much to Plato and Hegel, is most consistent with Christianity is another question. It is vague. No one claims to be able to define the content of its *end*. It does not take sufficient account of sin as a violation of moral law ; and it fits ill into the Christian doctrine of grace, for conduct is only to be regulated by an end which in itself is supposed both to allure and inspire to right actions.

Intuitionists encounter fewer difficulties. We speak of intuitionists who also hold by the teachings of Christianity ; for if these teachings be overlooked, it is impossible to find an explanation of moral phenomena. It is the distinct claim of Christ that He came to reveal the perfect life, and this He did first of all by showing what human life now is, as deeply affected by sin. He thus brought home to men's minds their need of a Saviour. For our part we see no hope for the race, with its sins and sorrows apart from Him ; and none for the solution of ethical problems if His teachings be set aside. Now, according to intuitionism, man is endowed with moral powers ; these are implanted in the constitution of his nature ; but given man as he has been and is, it is difficult to explain his moral constitution unless the facts on which Christianity

¹ *Vide* pp. 80-84.

² *Vide* pp. 118, 119.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

rests be taken into account. The testimony of conscience has varied from age to age. Yes; but why? Is it not because sin has greatly weakened the testimony of conscience? The variability of the testimony of conscience has been the idealist's strongest objection to intuitionism; but the difficulties supposed to be attached to the latter, so far as conscience is concerned, at once disappear when the fact of sin as a disturbing and disorganizing factor is recognised. Intuitionism, too, is quite consistent with the revelation of "the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ." A conflict still rages, but it is not so much between undefined ideals and sensuous nature as between "the law of the Spirit of Christ" and "the law of sin and death," the law *κατὰ σάρκα* and the law *κατὰ πνεῦμα*.

How this conflict goes on, and under what conditions, constitutes the problem of the Christian life, the ethics of which are so important if victory is to be won. The Christian who holds that moral intuitions are given in the constitution of human nature, and that the moral law of which they bear witness is the law by which actions are judged, who recognises that sin, *ἁμαρτία*, *miss*, *failure*, has disorganized his moral nature, rendering his perceptions obscure, and the path of duty often uncertain; and also believes that Christ came to reveal the nature of sin, to bring it home to men's conscience, to take it away, and to grant forgiveness and new life to all who receive Him, has also his ideals. These, however, are not vague. Christ embodies them in Himself, and has exhibited them in His human life. He lived the perfect life. In His own Person, having "made Him-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

self of no reputation,"¹ by His great deeds of mercy and His words of the highest wisdom, He revealed the principle of unity that reconciles all differences and removes all antagonisms. That precept is union with Himself and participation of His life. He showed also the infinite worth of the individual, and the moral unity of the race. The rights of others must, therefore, be respected and the well-being of all men sought. The individual stands in a personal relation to God. Humility on the part of the individual is most befitting in His Presence; but the claims of others lead also to humility, self-sacrifice, and self-abnegation. Humility, thus rooted, neither begets pride nor permits sycophancy. On the contrary, it guards against self-assertion on the one hand, and against obsequiousness on the other. Self-sacrifice is thus the natural and legitimate outcome of that spirit which estimates itself aright, and has regard to the worth and rights of others. It aims at once at lessening their sufferings and making for their good; and wherever it obtains to forgive offences becomes easy, while sincerity, toleration, progress, and a charity that always hopes the best, are its notes. Ethics which has such virtues as these for its content contains within itself the guarantees of right social relationships. But it needs to be remembered we owe it to the teachings of Christ that we have these ethical ideals. He gave a practical illustration of the operations of the principles which issue in brotherhood and make for service. In its loftiest flights the mind can conceive nothing higher than the life He lived, and the

¹ ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, *He emptied Himself* (Phil. ii. 7).

THE ETHICAL BASIS

truths He taught. These are man's true ideals, and to make it possible for him to attain them the powerful motive of love is imparted as Christ's further gift to the world. Read, therefore, in the presence of Christ, ethics has a new meaning; its imperatives are not legal but gracious, and the social state which it aims at establishing is one that will give a prominent place to righteousness and love, humility and self-sacrifice.

V

In dealing with Christian ethics we have now reached the stage where, having already seen its meaning, special consideration must be given to society as influenced and moulded by the ethical standard which Christianity sets up. The ethical element in society is the question of the day. All sociologists discuss it; and scarcely any other subject can be named that has a more absorbing interest. For theologians this question has a growing interest. Witness the conclusion to which Professor Bruce, in the second series of his *Gifford Lectures*, comes. After travelling over the wide fields of ancient and modern literature, in tracing the evidence for the Moral Order of the universe, he gives great prominence to ethics as it tells upon society. "The ethical must take precedence of the economical in all our thoughts and aspirations. First, righteousness; second, food and raiment."

Christianity begins by laying emphasis upon the value of the individual life, and personal responsibility. It also teaches quite clearly that the king-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

dom of God on earth is the reign of righteousness and love. For the realization of this kingdom Christians are taught to labour and pray. Not yet has it come in its fulness, but it is coming. The ideal to be realized and to attain which Christ summons all His followers by the presentation of the purest motives, is social, brotherly, altruistic. One by one men enter into the kingdom through personal submission to Christ; but when they have become members of His kingdom, the duty is imposed upon them of living for the well-being of their fellows. They are called to service. The strong must "bear the infirmities of the weak." The forming of selfish plans and the pursuing of selfish ends are both out of place. "Even Christ pleased not Himself." He gave Himself to service. "He went about doing good;" and those who bear His name must follow Him. He is their Example, and therefore the spirit which He displayed must also be that which they should exhibit.

Within recent years much has been written to make plain to Christians that it is not enough to labour and pray for their own personal safety, to make sure of saving their souls. Accordingly it is now being more generally perceived that efficient service is the end unto which men are redeemed. Election is unto service. Christ saves men that they may be fit to serve. He also confers gifts that they may be employed for the good of others. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."¹ These are the teachings of Christianity, and their bearing upon

¹ *Vide* Romans xiv. 7, where the idea of brotherhood is emphasized and developed in a practical way.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

social life cannot easily be mistaken. One of the most notable features of the more liberal and better class of Christian literature to-day is the clear perception of brotherhood and the service it implies. "In Christ all men are brethren," writes Bishop Westcott, and he adds, "Our relationship one to another does not depend on any remote descent: it is not perilled by any possible discovery as to the origin or antiquity of man: it is not bound by the conditions of the outward life: it is not measured by the course of days and years: it is not closed by death. The brotherhood of man seen in Christ is a question not of genealogy but of being."¹

It is the distinct claim of Christianity that its principles permeate and transform human society. Ἐρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς.² No single manifestation exhausts the meaning of Christ's great promise. He *is ever coming*. He is in every social movement of our times, and the new revelations He gives always make for the progress of society. They are intended to throw light upon the individual life, and also upon the larger social and political relationships. Christianity has, indeed, much to say respecting the ethical factors which go to preserve society. It sets up, on the one hand, the highest ideals, and, on the other, contributes the most powerful motives for attaining them; and where these are neglected the social life grows weak, and inroads are made upon the moral stability of society. Professor Andrew Harper, of Ormond College, Melbourne, gives a remarkable illustration of such neglect. Speaking of the influence of the Christian

¹ *Social Aspects of Christianity*, p. 9. ² John xiv. 18.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

religion on the moral and social life of Victoria, "the Government," he says, "went to the disgraceful extreme of removing the name of Christ from the school books." When the State system, he continues, "was at its worst, it rendered anything like moral training impossible, for it forbade all reference to the Christian sanctions of morals, and put nothing in their place. . . . In our folly we cut up the roots of moral life in the schools, and we have seen it wither away."¹

But if within recent years special attention has been directed to the brotherly and altruistic teachings of Christianity, it is also true that Christianity has been placed on its defence. This is no new thing. It has been often assailed, sometimes on its theoretical, sometimes on its practical side. Its history is the record of conflict and victory. At no previous period, however, has its ethical basis of society been so systematically controverted as at the present time. Those who assail it, too, are quite confident that they have truth and reason on their side. Here, as elsewhere, Mr. Spencer may be taken as the leading opponent. He employs all the resources of his critical faculty to prove his contentions. In the ethics associated with his name there is little certainty, and almost nothing of finality, but the lack of these things does not hinder him from assailing the ethics of Christianity. His chief attack is delivered against what he designates "irrational altruism;" but the manner in which he conducts his assault obliges him to make many assumptions. "Work, enterprise, invention, improvement," he says, "as they have gone on from the begin-

¹ Vide *The British Weekly*, Feb. 18th, 1894.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

ning, and are going on now, arise out of the principle that among citizens severally having unsatisfied wants, each cares more to satisfy his own wants than to satisfy the wants of others;" and he adds, "the fact that industrial activities grow from this root being recognised, the inevitable implication is that unqualified altruism would dissolve all existing social organizations."¹ Is it, then, true that work, enterprise, etc., arise from the principle here specified? If so, what of the psychological data which sociologists, Mr. Spencer among the rest, have published? Where do they come in? Contract and alliance, imitation, mutual aid, or consciousness of kind, one or other of these factors is held to explain all social phenomena, work, enterprise, etc., included; but if any one of them is enough—and it is the boast of each advocate that his own theory is sufficient—the formula of each person caring to satisfy his own wants rather than the wants of others, cannot give a satisfactory explanation. That seems plain enough.

But, again, are not work and enterprise mainly undertaken for the sake of the benefit which they may confer upon others? Has Mr. Spencer written his monumental *Synthetic Philosophy* merely to gratify his own wishes, and not chiefly to attempt an explanation of life's dark and perplexing problems that others may see the way more clearly, and thus profit by his labours? Are inventions and improvements not made primarily for the sake of mastering nature's laws? or in making them have men not principally in view the good that may be conferred

¹ *The Study of Sociology*, p. 179.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

on mankind? If any one of these questions receives an affirmative answer, then the theory of satisfying wants breaks down. Mr. Spencer, however, has a definite ultimate object in making the statement under review; for he draws from it the large deduction that since industrial activities arise out of this egoistic principle, unqualified altruism, if allowed to rule, would dissolve all existing social organizations. This assumption, as we have just seen, does not rest upon valid grounds; but even if we allow that it does, assent cannot be given to the statement as to unqualified altruism being descriptive of Christian ethics. Mr. Spencer's premisses, to begin with, are doubtful. No informed Christian would grant them; but next he introduces into his conclusions terms for which no provision has been made. He puts too much into his conclusions. But there is a still more serious objection than that of logical form; for if by the reign of altruism is meant the reign of a spirit of brotherliness, so far from that making for disintegration, it rather supplies the very strongest motive power to a right and prosperous society, in which each will work not for his own personal benefit only, but also, and chiefly, for the benefit of his fellows. If, for instance, a concrete illustration is taken, it is at once seen how brotherliness operates. Take, say, the case of a family in which a brotherly spirit reigns. Is the motive that services rendered will confer benefits on those held in affection not stronger than any incentive which aims only at personal gains? Do brothers not at once and instinctively perceive that the highest good of each is best

THE ETHICAL BASIS

secured when all work for a common end? And if this is possible within a narrow, it must also be attainable within a wider, circle. It is here, indeed, that altruism enters as a vital and conservative power, and no amount of adverse reasoning can invalidate or weaken its influence.

But Mr. Spencer maintains that Christians do not carry out the principles they profess. The reproof which he administers to those who profess, but do not obey, the teachings of Christ ought to be received in a spirit of submission and with humility. Their faults and failings are manifest enough. Many of them, indeed, are too much concerned about their own personal projects and plans, and fail to perceive the ideals of service which they are bound to realize; but failure to realize ideals does not prove them irrational. Mr. Spencer's contention is that the ethics of Christianity is unattainable, because its altruism is irrational. But where is the proof of this contention? Christianity enforces obedience to the laws of righteousness and love. To discharge the duties it imposes is to realize brotherhood. It emphasizes duties. It lays, however, no obligation on its adherents to provide for those who will not work, but only for those who cannot. It holds the mean between duties and rights; and in doing this, also, at the same time, recognises that there are great difficulties to be overcome before its ideals can be attained. Evil is deeply rooted in human nature; false principles have long held sway, and the hard facts of human experience prove man's great need of Divine aid. To say, then, in view of these things, that the followers of Christ

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

have not been obedient to His teachings is far from proving that His commands are Utopian and irrational. At the utmost it is only an admission that Christians have not sufficiently recognised the nature of the opposition to be overcome, and have not clearly perceived that they are chiefly and mainly called to service. But these things were not unforeseen, for the Master predicted that the rate of the progress of His Kingdom would be slow. "Christ's whole conduct and teaching were influenced by the belief that the kingdom which He was engaged in founding was to have a lengthened history, and to pass through a gradual, secular process of development onwards towards its final consummation."¹ Already such evils as slavery have been largely suppressed, and there are many signs that the followers of Christ are awakening to a sense of their duties in relation to social problems and the ethical questions that affect the conduct of nations. It cannot, however, be a matter of regret that opponents like Mr. Spencer should have challenged Christians to apply these principles to all departments of social and national life. It is, we think, a pity that they should have, as Dr. Martineau says, "subjugated character to science instead of freeing it into religion;" but this apart, they have certainly rendered service in rebuking Christians for their manifest neglect of the plainest duties, and in obliging them to look abroad and see where Christian principles apply. Many take the reproof administered in good part; and as Adam Smith turned from the study of *Moral Sentiments* to write his great work on

¹ *The Parabolic Teaching of Christ*, by Professor Bruce, p. 127.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

The Wealth of Nations, so they turn from the fruitless discussion of theoretical questions and ask themselves how they can make the world better ; for as they note the features of the social evolution going on, they eagerly desire the day when Christian principles shall be applied to all departments of life, individual, social, and national, and the life of the people everywhere be elevated and purified through the operations of the sovereign laws of righteousness, truth and love.

But do Christian principles avail for nations ? Does Christian ethics apply to them ? Is there such a thing as international morality ? Complaint is often made that while the ethics of Christianity avails for the individual and family, it has completely failed in the wider political sphere. Mr. Frederic Harrison has frequently urged this objection against Christianity. In his *New Year's Address* to the Society of Positivists in 1889,¹ he makes much of the backward condition of Europe, and lays, to a large extent, the blame on Christianity, which, he says, has been fairly successful on its individual side, but has failed on its social, intellectual, and political side. It does practically nothing, according to Mr. Harrison, to control the jealousy of nations, while the dignitaries of the Church bless the armies of emperors and kings. Mr. Harrison has recently returned to this subject. The occasion was the delivery of the *Romanes Lecture* by Mr. John Morley, who chose as his subject Machiavelli. Mr. Morley offered a partial defence for the Florentine publicist, who, living in an immoral age, separated politics from ethics, and urged the Prince to seek first

¹ Vide the *Times* Report.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

and at all hazards the welfare and freedom of his country. Mr. Morley was, however, careful to say that, at least in profession if not yet in practice, we have departed from the Machiavellian theory. In the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* the controversy thus raised was carried on by Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Harrison. The position which Mr. Harrison has taken up and defended is quite definite; for he says, "The attempt to distinguish between morality towards foreigners, and morality towards our fellow-countrymen is pure moonshine. The specific acts may differ; but the moral standard is the same in kind."¹

The attitude which Mr. Harrison has taken up must also be that which Christians are bound to adopt; for whoever follows faithfully the teachings of Christ cannot hold that there is one ethical standard for the individual, and another for nations. The moral law is of universal application; justice has nothing of variability in it; and it knows no respect of persons. Fraud, deceit, lying, change neither in essence nor in effect whenever committed, whether by the individual or nations. Christians may not insist upon the universality of the ethics of their religion; they may allow self-interests to govern them in their national actions, but therein they are false to Him Whom they profess to obey; and they are powerless to arrest the Nemesis that must ultimately overtake them. National righteousness is as much a demand and is as imperative as is personal righteousness. On the one hand, the history of the great empires that have fallen from the proudest positions, not so much from hostile

¹ *The Nineteenth Century*, September, 1897.

THE ETHICAL BASIS

attacks as from inward moral decay, and on the other, the earnest appeal now so often made, that statesmen should do the right, whatever may be the consequences, bear witness to the universality of ethical claims. Publicists are not required to formulate a code of international morality. It has been framed already, and is given in the constitution of man's moral nature.

We know that this is seriously disputed ; but if the grounds upon which objection is taken to the universality of the moral law are valid, progress cannot be interpreted, and the stability of society cannot be guaranteed. We take two representative writers, and examine their interpretation of progress, and the kind of society to which their ethics leads. First, we select Lord Lytton. In his *Rectorial Address* to the undergraduates of Glasgow University,¹ discussing the question, "Is morality the same for nations as for individuals?" he affirms that the ethical principles which apply to the one do not govern the other. "Public morals," he says, "have only one sanction, and that is prudence, or the fear of natural consequences." "There is," he somewhat contradictorily adds, "no sanction of morals;" they are "a branch rather of prudence;" and justice as between nation and nation is only "prudent moderation." Statesmen, while "subject to some of the weightiest sanctions of private morals," are not to be judged as private individuals. "Lying, indifference to human suffering, rapacity, cruelty," are allowed not "to lose their essential character because they are incidental to public action.

¹ Vide *Glasgow Herald*, November 10th, 1888.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

And yet, even in the case of these offences, we are not," says Lord Lytton, "to judge statesmen as we judge private persons." If the doctrines thus insisted upon are true, progress is unintelligible, and society resting on such a foundation is unstable; for conduct dictated by prudence explains nothing. Prudence, from *provideo*, signifies foresight; but of what? You reply, "Of the consequences of one's conduct;" but again, of consequences of one's conduct guided by what standard? If the standard is an unknown moral quality, actions must be haphazard and society a riddle.

Lord Lytton does not recognise any authority beyond legal systems; and of these he says, "A law which does not coerce is no law at all." Where there is no power to inflict punishment there is, in his judgment, no basis for public morality; "it is at best a counsel or advice," and nothing more. According to his interpretation of human relationships morality rests upon force. He excludes a moral Governor and a moral order in the universe. Morality does not rest upon righteousness, and the moral judgment that the nation which does wrong shall perish is an empty threat; for there is not One higher and greater than all human beings who conserves and guards the interests of moral government, and suffers not the transgressor to go unpunished. Lord Lytton makes a direct return to Hobbes without any attempt at modifying his doctrine. All, indeed, who adopt his way of interpreting progress and society must accept Hobbism.

The second writer we quote is Dr. Sidgwick, who professedly follows Hobbes. He, however, makes

THE ETHICAL BASIS

certain modifications upon Hobbes' doctrine. The convictions of the political idealist, and those of the advocates of moral order, he says, "belong to a stage which the movement of nineteenth century thought has now left behind it;"¹ and "morality—the sum of the conditions of harmonious human living in society—is a system that man is always bound to keep before his mind as an ideal; but his obligation to realize it in act is conditional on a reasonable expectation of reciprocity."² This is Hobbes' theory of moral conduct; but Dr. Sidgwick modifies it to the extent that he adds to reciprocity urgency of need, and regard to the interests of humanity. Urgent need, for instance, may set aside the claims of veracity. A general in war may disseminate false statements to mislead the enemy. The detection of crime may be effected by deception.³ These are legitimate actions; but "the movement of nineteenth century thought" has gone so far as to condemn "the use of falsehood, and spies, and stratagems in diplomacy," and a diplomatist is no longer a person "sent to lie abroad for the benefit of his country." Wiles may be met with wiles, falsehood with falsehood, breach of faith with breach of faith, a promise made under force may be broken after the danger is past—all these are justifiable if there be urgent need, or if the interests of humanity require them. But surely this is to set up the most subjective standard ever enunciated. It is left to the individual or nation to say when there is need. If this standard is allowed, Europe cannot any longer condemn the proverbial Turkish rule. The Turks

¹ *Practical Ethics*, p. 67. ² *Ibid.* p. 71. ³ *Ibid.* p. 75.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

may plead urgent need, or even the interest of humanity, for their actions. The martyrs who suffered for their faith must also have made a mistake, for promises made under fear of the dungeon or stake could have been easily broken. The civil and religious privileges won by the martyrs' blood, and which have made for the greatest progress, might have been secured otherwise; their sufferings were at least a mistake. This is suggested as if freedom of any kind, political or religious, had ever been secured otherwise than by sufferings. For our part we hold that society based on deception, or a nation's existence which necessitates falsehood, cannot endure, and that because the moral order of the world is set at defiance.

V

The Economic Basis of Society

I

THE study of the science of human society passes by a natural transition from ethics to economics. The discussion of ethical theories precedes that of economic questions. An ethical basis must first be found before an attempt is made to build up the economic structure. The moral theory which is adopted, indeed, largely determines the economic standpoint. The abstract becomes the concrete; and when moral theories are brought to the touchstone of experience their practical worth can be easily tested. The economic structure, for instance, which is based on evolutionary ethics assumes the form of the survival of the fittest. Haeckel, in his *Freie Wissenschaft und freie Lehre*, declares that it must be aristocratic. The interests of the many, he says, are justly pushed aside by those of the few who, in virtue of their superior power, have the right to rule; for in economics, as in the physical world, natural law is supreme and must prevail. The prospects for the race which are thus

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

opened up afford anything but bright hopes for the toiling millions. Inspired, however, by a conviction which they may be able neither to analyse nor explain, the great masses of men refuse to accept this end as their final lot, whilst many moralists believe that neither birth, nor power, nor wealth, nor even mental ability can monopolise all the good things of life. In moral qualities alone, the ultimate right of ruling resides. The ethical is stronger than the cosmic process. Hence not without good reason many who have pondered long and earnestly the problem of human life have come to the conclusions, *first*, that the ethics which is altruistic alone can afford a sufficient basis for society; and *second*, that the moral and spiritual endowments of man are the strongest arguments in favour of the human race ultimately attaining to fair and just economic conditions. This, they believe, is man's heritage; and the knowledge of it, they further contend, is the most powerful incentive to that moral endeavour which has for its aims the bettering of the lot of the struggling poor, the development of the latent moral and spiritual potentialities of man's being, and the establishment of a social state in which righteousness and love shall be supreme.

The postulate which those make who thus reason is, that man has inalienable rights of which he cannot be deprived without injustice being done, and, therefore, society suffering. Each man, for example, has the right to live and enjoy a measure of comfort; but the existence of monopolies, and the accumulation of the means of living in the hands of a few, render it almost impossible for man to enjoy his rights. Hence econo-

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

mics and ethics both enter and urge their claims; for the former inquires how monopolies have arisen, and what use men make of their riches;¹ and the latter offers alternative theories, either one which buttresses positions of privilege, or one that recognises the rights which are based on brotherhood. Social workers, whether they be informed economists or not, almost without exception declare for the latter theory. They may not perceive how much they owe to Christianity, yet they really adopt Christian principles, and hold that permanent and satisfactory social relationships can only be realized when brotherly actions hold sway; and in their judgment it is not a mere dream, but rather a valid deduction from verified premisses that a time must come, when all the world over it shall be seen, that the highest good of each person is most effectively secured by the subordination of personal pursuits to the welfare and well-being of a common brotherhood. The process of education may be slow; but it is becoming more and more manifest that the development of man's highest powers, and the realization of his truest interests cannot be attained by pursuits that aim merely and chiefly at personal gratification. To realize one's highest good it is necessary to live for the good of others; for, to give away one's life is to find it. That is the truest philosophy; it is also the teaching of Christ. He illustrated this ethical law in His own life, and enforced obedience to it on His followers. Ages have elapsed, and Christians are only as yet slowly perceiving that

¹ *Vide* p. 182.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

this is the true economics; but if slowly, it is also surely being ascertained as true, and as one of the essential foundations of society.

The altruistic element which Christianity imparts to economics is, however, seriously questioned. Many of those who controvert its worth are themselves distinguished for their interest in, and contributions to, sociology. No writers, for instance, have discussed social problems with more energy than Huxley, Spencer, and Haeckel, the chief exponents of sociology on the side of natural science. But sociology, whether in their hands or in those of others, is itself concerned with the question of *methods* in the making of society. The altruism which springs out of Christian ethics propounds an economic method and urges the application of distinctive principles. The ethics which is associated with natural science acknowledges no economic considerations higher than egoism and the health of society; the former is essentially selfish, and the latter is vague. Christianity makes all things subservient to brotherhood. That is its solution of social ills. Let a spirit of brotherhood prevail; let altruism dictate actions, and the social questions which present so many baffling elements shall find a solution that answers at once the ethical question, What is justice? and the economic problem, How can justice be attained? The expression of moral ideals, personal rights and duties, in terms of a solidarity that is rooted in love, shows how the hardest tasks may be accomplished and the greatest sacrifices made with comparative ease.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

II

It must not, however, be assumed that the economics which thus makes for the stability and efficiency of society has received, or is even now receiving, the attention which it deserves. It is essential to society; but if its contribution is to be rightly estimated, it is necessary to understand, in the first place, the chief service which economics, as such, renders to the elucidation of social relationships; next, its relation to the other sciences of human life, psychology, ethics, politics, and religion; and further, the subjects with which it deals. When these fundamental questions have been considered, we shall be in a position for estimating with greater fairness the value of the two great economic theories, individualism and socialism.

First, as to the important service which economics renders, this will be at once perceived if we reflect how frequently earnest reformers assume that political organization, apart from economics, is sufficient "to right the wrong." Given right political conditions, and society, they argue, shall not only be made stable, but also marked by far greater progress than anything yet attained. Considerable difference of opinion, however, necessarily prevails as to what are right political conditions. Whig and Conservative, Liberal and Radical respectively contend that if their own specific political principles were adopted, society would soon reach an ideal state. Witness the appeals and promises which politicians make to the electorate who respond to the appeals and accept the promises,

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

believing evidently that society will be thus reorganized on a proper basis, and injustice cease to reign.

That political organization has played, and is destined yet to play, an important part in the evolution of society is beyond dispute. We do not enter into the merits or demerits of political parties; but it may be safely allowed that the discussions that have been conducted have often cleared the air and made for progress, while in many instances the political measures that have been passed, have conferred benefits upon large numbers of the people. Political controversy is, then, to a certain extent a guarantee of progress. On the other hand, periods of political dead-calm have been, as history testifies, those in which the seeds of evil have been most abundantly sown. But this is impossible when political questions are eagerly canvassed; for, whatever side prevails, its action is more or less modified by the principles and opinions of opponents. The one acts and reacts upon the other. Political organization has thus served, and still serves, a useful end, and the work done by means of it, therefore, cannot be overlooked. Politics is, indeed, a science of the first importance, and deserves the closest study.

Politics alone is not, however, sufficient for the reorganization of society. There might be a perfect political system, and injustice might be as rampant as ever. No story is more painful than that of the hopes entertained by the wage-earning classes during the first half of the present century, when they hastily concluded that by the passing of Reform Bills a perfect social state would be realized. To receive

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

enfranchisement was held to be the sure pledge that political and social evils would be speedily removed ; but large masses of the people have been enfranchised, and yet the golden age lies in the future. The right to exercise a vote may be a step towards it, but at the best, and unless accompanied by far greater changes, nothing save disappointment is in store for those who regard the exercise of political rights as their final aim. In the United States of America there is at the present time an almost ideal system of representation, but there is scarcely any other country where political corruption more abounds. It enters every department of State and municipal service, and is a temptation to even the strongest. Hence the complaint so often made by the American people, that their best men do not offer themselves for political service.

Highly developed political organization is not, then, an absolute guarantee of progress. Political freedom alone is not a safeguard against acts of injustice. The triumph of any political party is not necessarily the triumph of the right. Other elements must be introduced, and of these, economics is one of the most essential. Indeed, the character of the economic basis of society goes a long way to determine society itself. Fortunately many within recent years are beginning to recognise the paramount place which belongs to economics. It is no longer regarded as "dismal," and that because it is seen to be "a study of man's actions in the ordinary business of life." To the science have been given a broader basis and a wider outlook. It inquires how a man "gets his income and how he uses it. Thus it is on one side a study of wealth, and on the

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

other and more important side a study of man.”¹ The older economists argued “as though man’s character and efficiency were to be regarded as a fixed quantity,” while “modern economists keep carefully in mind the fact that it is a product of circumstances under which he has lived.”² Economists, therefore, no longer speak of man as “a covetous machine;” their science deals with him as a responsible person, and takes note of the motives which influence his conduct as well as of the aims he has in view. Mr. Kidd has reproduced, with some variations, Professor Marshall’s statements.³ He says that economics is now more closely related to biological science “than to the mathematico-physical group upon which it leant at the beginning of the century.” Professor Giddings explains economic questions in terms of psychology, Mr. Spencer in those of biology; while others, like M. Fouillée, maintaining that the biological conception is partly mechanical and partly psychological, and for that reason inadequate, adopt a broad sociological conception, and treat economics as an essential element in a wider synthesis.⁴ It would, as we shall in the next section try to show, be more correct to treat economics as standing in a definite relation to the other sciences of human life, but especially as having psychological and ethical roots; flowering and bearing fruit in politics and religion.

But, however interpreted, the broad fact stands out

¹ *Principles of Economics*, by Professor Marshall: Introduction.

² *Ibid.* p. 64.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 64, 65; and *Social Evolution*, by Benjamin Kidd, p. 26.

⁴ See above, p. 68.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

quite distinctly, that economics deals not so much with figures as with human motives, desires, and aims, and with these as they apply to the production, exchange, and distribution of commodities. Mathematical estimates of utility throw light only upon the most elementary questions of economics, and leave many practical and concrete questions untouched. Professor Pantaleoni, in his *Manuale di Economia Pura*, has recently made an attempt to treat economics after the fashion of the older English economists; but his work, in many respects excellent and useful, proves nothing else so clearly as the limitations of pure economics. The science requires a wider treatment. Like philosophy and religion, it has an easily traced history. At first it was dealt with in an abstract manner. Laws of wealth were deduced from the hedonistic principle that men are actuated by the motive which urges them to seek the gratification of their desires with the least possible exertion. Economics for a long period rested upon the psychological postulate which was thus assumed. The treatment given to it was theoretical and abstract. Theories were confidently propounded; and insistence on theories issued in dogmatism and fruitless controversy. Economics, therefore, became as dry as dust, and earned the title of *dismal*. But within recent years the hedonistic hypothesis has been re-examined; many have set it aside as indefensible. The science has been liberated, and now it deals with many of the most practical and most urgent questions of the day. It raises issues which tell directly and powerfully upon all departments of human life. A right view of its province

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

influences one's attitude to all social questions; and there is, therefore, good reason for the statement of Professor Graham, who says that "the decisive battle must be fought in the field of economics."¹

Second. Having thus adverted to the service which economics renders, we have now to ascertain the relation in which economics stands towards the other sciences of life—psychology and ethics, politics and religion. It occupies a quite definite place among the sciences of life. Attention has often been called to the intimate relation that subsists between these sciences. It is, indeed, almost impossible to discuss any one of them without considering the others; but while writers on ethics frequently refer to psychology, economics, and politics; and writers on religion, to psychology and ethics, no serious attempt has been made to define exhaustively the relationship itself. It is doubtless a great gain to have had an interest awakened in all these sciences, and it is a still greater benefit when those who study them look for a unity in all departments of human life; but before anything like real progress can be accomplished the *nexus verum* itself must be clearly perceived. This is of great advantage in discussing any of the sciences of life; and it is absolutely necessary if society itself is to be rightly understood. Assuming, then, that psychology, ethics, economics, politics, and religion all come under the operations of a common law which is uniform in its operations; and that they are not, in any sense, isolated units, but knit together, and as such act and react upon each other, we have

¹ *Socialism New and Old*, p. 24.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

now to inquire what is the relationship which binds them so closely together. The nature of this relationship is at once perceived when it is seen that economics stands midway between psychology and ethics on the one hand, and politics and religion on the other. The psychological data that are postulated, and the ethical theories that are adopted, largely determine economic conceptions; and, again, the economic principles that are accepted go a long way in giving character to politics, and even to religion. Let us examine these statements with care; for much depends upon the grounds on which they rest, while the interpretation of society itself is greatly aided if it can be shown that they are well founded.

(a) All investigations respecting social phenomena must begin with psychology. Mental states must be carefully analysed. The emphasis that is laid upon *reason, feeling, or will* largely determines, as we have already seen, the lines of all subsequent inquiries as to ethics and economics. Psychological analysis is, therefore, essential. The results of such an analysis go a long way to show how ethical and economic theories come to be adopted. Our psychology colours our ethics, and our ethics, again colours our economics. The history of mental philosophy makes it, indeed, abundantly plain that, according as the psychological data postulated be traced to the operations of a cosmic process, or to moral endowments given in the constitution of man's nature, so ethical principles are held to have their authority either in custom, education, and utility, or in a moral law which man instinctively and intuitively recognises as imperative. Whatever

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

ethical theory is adopted, economics takes its character from that which is chosen. We have already had occasion to state and illustrate at length the intimate relation subsisting between psychological postulates, and conceptions of society;¹ and as we shall in the next chapter attempt to trace the genesis of individualism to its psychological and ethical roots, it is not necessary in the meantime to advert further to this subject, unless perhaps to say that all ethical theories make more or less for one or other of the two great economic theories—individualism or socialism. Thus, hedonism naturally supplies a basis for the former, since it lays emphasis on egoism; while the latter finds support in idealism, which sets up high ends to be realized through society, and in intuitionism, which insists upon obedience to moral law as of universal application. How these ethical theories work out in economic practice can, we think, be easily enough perceived; and the light that is thus thrown on social relationships is of considerable value.

(b) But just as economics is largely dependent upon psychology and ethics, so also are politics and religion affected by economics. This statement requires a somewhat fuller treatment. Economics in point of time precedes politics, and prepares the way for the legislator; for the question as to whether individualism, or socialism, or an economic theory that combines what is truest and best in both, ought to obtain, gives character to all legislative Acts. In saying this it is not, however, maintained that politicians have always been, or even now always are, conscious of the operations

¹ *Vide* pp. 34, 35.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

of the deeper economic principles that have so much to do with their political programmes ; but, whether conscious or not, economic conceptions govern their actions. The proof of this statement lies to hand. Until within quite recent times, the economics which governed legislative action was almost entirely of an individualistic type. Individualism was everywhere operative, and ruled with supreme sway. It scarcely occurred to any economist to controvert its claims. Only a few thinkers, at long intervals, questioned its pretensions, but the protests which they ventured to offer, generally in an allegorical form,¹ were easily set aside as the utterances of mere Utopians. That these are not unwarranted statements, is witnessed to by authorities whose broad generalizations of social movements give them a right to speak. Thus Dr. Sidgwick says that "the legislation of modern civilised communities is, in the main, framed on an individualistic basis ;"² and Mr. McKechnie, employing almost identical terms, remarks that "our present civilization is founded on an essentially individualistic basis."³ No informed person who reflects can, therefore, be surprised that when reformers, greatly daring, ventured to deny the claims of individualism, alarm should have been expressed. That was natural enough ; and it can also be easily understood, in view of these circumstances, how economists should have

¹ The spirit of the times did not permit anything so greatly daring as that of questioning the claims of individualism. Hence the allegory had to be resorted to.

² *The Elements of Politics*, p. 39.

³ *The State and the Individual*, p. 214.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

hastened with the aid of old economic arguments to buttress the social fabric which seemed about to fall with a crash that would terrify and ruin all good citizens.

Accordingly the first efforts that were made to legislate on behalf of women and children engaged in mines and factories, received little support from either economists or politicians. Without anything like an adequate grasp of economic principles, or even without seeing wherein their own well-being lay, those who hired women and children maintained that these legislative proposals were an infringement of individual rights; and they therefore offered them a strenuous resistance. The great hardships, however, inflicted upon thousands of helpless women and children by insisting upon individual rights soon made modified forms of socialistic legislation comparatively easy; and now, also, the claims of socialism are urged by writers who encounter little of the opposition which those who first advocated them had to meet. Professor Edward Caird, of whom it may be justly said that *quodcumque tangit, id ornat*, in a recent lecture to the Civic Society of Glasgow, specifies a number of things which the Government may, with great advantage to the people, regulate.¹ The concessions to socialism which the Master of Balliol enumerates supply evidence of the progress which has been made; and that because of the more rational methods adopted in making social improvements, and of the new attitude now taken up with respect to great and fundamental economic questions. The rate

¹ *Individualism and Socialism*, p. 13.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

of progress made when as yet, in more conservative quarters, socialistic claims are only being discussed, is an augury of the still greater concessions that may be safely yielded. But among those who are untrammelled by conservative instincts far greater changes have taken place, and greater demands are made. Multitudes of these have been drawn to socialism, even though many of them cannot define its claims, or state its remedy for the evils of the day. The more thoughtful of them, it is true, have endeavoured to give to socialism a scientific treatment. Socialistic societies have, therefore, rapidly sprung up, programmes have been issued, and, as Mr. Kirkup points out, notwithstanding the difficulties that must be surmounted, signs are not wanting that the economic basis of society is being slowly changed.¹ All these things are proofs that multitudes, dissatisfied with individualism, have travelled a long way beyond its chosen ground since the first tentative socialistic proposals were made; and in the most convincing manner they afford evidence that economics powerfully and directly tells upon politics.

The influence of economic conceptions upon religion is equally manifest. It is true that there are many things in religion that are far higher than any thing purely economic; for it deals with the highest truths to which the human mind can apply itself, yet the highest of these have a more or less direct bearing upon man's welfare. A great change has recently taken place as to the way in which Christian people look at the duties of religion. The religious life

¹ *An Inquiry into Socialism*, p. 16.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

reflects more or less distinctly the spirit of the times. The intensely individualistic manner of looking at religion which many unduly emphasized, has been corrected by socialistic conceptions. To make sure of one's own safety is not the only or final end of religion. It is not even the way to secure personal salvation; "for whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."¹ Through personal trust in Jesus Christ, the personal Saviour, an entrance into His kingdom is secured; but one of Love's imperatives, imposed upon all who are within the kingdom, is to labour and pray for the well-being of others. Christianity knows nothing of selfishness; it is brotherly, social; and now the emphasis which many Christian teachers lay upon the altruistic aspects of Christianity is one of the most distinctive notes of the teachings of the day.

How this change has taken place, many who are most captivated by it may not pause to inquire; but if one reflects for a moment, he soon perceives that it is largely due to the prevailing economic conceptions of the present time. Christianity itself has not changed, but the interpretation of it has; for it is now more literal and faithful. Theologians, writing mainly in the interests of freedom of inquiry and a return to the historical Jesus, have called attention to the profound significance of the interpreting phrase, *the Kingdom of God*, and to that kingdom as a great social force. It may perhaps, then, be said that the change is due to the more faithful interpretation of the life and sayings of Christ. That might be

¹ Luke xvii, 3.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

allowed, were it not true that religious teachers more frequently follow than lead in social movements. We may owe something to them, but much more to economic conceptions now obtaining. At the present time the claims which our brothers have upon our service are strongly urged by many who profess no religion. Many anti-Christian societies, that are also socialistic, have insisted upon brotherliness, and have, indeed, derived most of the success that has attended their labours from their insistence upon common interests and common aims. They have won over to their societies thousands for no other reason than that they have appealed to brotherly rights and duties. But they have also influenced Christian thought; for they have forced Christians to look at essential aspects of Christianity which have for long periods been forgotten, and it has come to many Christians as the great surprise of their lives that Christianity, interpreted simply, declares more strongly for brotherliness than any anti-Christian society could possibly do. It aims at producing the best *conditions* for the development of *character*. The former, while subordinate to the latter, are yet essential. Accordingly, Christianity requires obedience to the highest laws and supplies the most enlightened motives to disinterested service. It inculcates justice as between man and man, urges the claims of love, and insists upon a lowly mind and a pure heart. The matchless beauty of the Master's words at once fascinate and win us, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

My yoke is easy and My burden is light." ¹ Where the obedience thus required springs from such motives as here indicated, there will issue as a natural result those conditions which make for a perfect character and true social relationships.

There is, however, it must be acknowledged, only too much cause for the complaint that the professed followers of Christ have been content with the endeavour after what they call "spiritual things." Injustice is thus done to one and an important side of human nature. Christianity has not, therefore, had fair play at the hands of its adherents. Even great religious revivals have come and gone without being fully utilised in the interests of social improvements. Those who have been most enthusiastic, and have claimed to receive great spiritual benefits, have not fearlessly applied the saving and elevating principles of their religion to business affairs, and have not insisted that the gracious power which saves the individual is sufficient also to reorganize society. Religious leaders have not, indeed, fully grasped the significance of religion as applied to social questions. They have not spoken and acted as if they really believed that God's will can and ought to be done on earth as it is done in heaven. But fortunately, thanks to the insistence of those who have urged the claims of social duties, many forgotten aspects of Christianity are being recalled, and are receiving an attention such as they never have received at any former period. The Church is slowly awakening to a sense of her social duties. Writers, like Bishop

¹ Matt. xi. 29, 30.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

Westcott, are insisting upon the discharge of these duties, firmly persuaded that Christianity contains the ethical force, and that because it is based on great religious truths, which shall solve the social questions of the day. All these things, then, supply indubitable proofs that economics is telling effectively upon religion.

Third. Since economics occupies a central and important place, on the one hand, being determined by psychology and ethics, and, on the other, to a large extent affecting politics and religion, it is imperative that clear ideas should be entertained as to its province and the subjects with which it deals. We have already had occasion to quote the comprehensive definition of economics which Professor Marshall has given. He conceives the science as dealing with the question, how a man "gets his income and how he uses it." This is a sufficiently wide definition of the province and contents of economics; and under it all that touches welfare can be considered. Many divisions of the subjects with which economics deals have been attempted. Almost all modern economists have set out with a separate division; and this has been done with a view to throw clearer light upon the questions discussed.¹ The attempts, however, at original treatment can scarcely be said to have been crowned with success; for after all has been stated that can possibly be adduced, the old and familiar

¹ Mr. Edward Cannan says, in his Preface to the second edition of his *Elementary Political Economy*, that he has not scrupled "to abandon both the traditional arrangement of subjects and the special terminology of the economists."

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

division affords the best categories into which the subjects of the science can be placed. There is, we admit, much room for clearer definitions of economic terms; but, with that exception, the most convenient and satisfactory arrangement is that which treats the subject-matter economics as divided into production, exchange, and distribution of goods or wealth. Here at the outset there is need for carefully observing the meaning of that which is produced. Professor Marshall prefers the term *goods*; others prefer *wealth*. By wealth is meant, according to Adam Smith, "that portion of the results of land and labour which is capable of being accumulated." McCulloch defines it as "those material products which have exchangeable value"; Mill as "a large stock of useful articles"; and Ruskin as "things which make for life." The term really denotes useful articles which may be exchanged for other articles that gratify the desires.

1. What, then, are the factors which enter into the production of wealth? Three things go to make wealth: *land*, *labour*, and *capital*. There is little ambiguity as to the meaning of these terms. Much discussion has, however, turned upon the things they represent; but, with the exception of the last of them economists are agreed as to what they mean. Many adjectives have been applied to capital, such as circulating, fixed, individual, social, etc., but it is generally recognised that the term signifies wealth in use, *i.e.*, employed for the purpose of gaining a livelihood or making profit. "Capital," says Mill, "is wealth devoted to reproductive employment." With this explanation we may now proceed to consider the three

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

chief factors in producing the things which make for life.

(a) As to *land*, it is a truism of economics that without land real wealth cannot be produced. All the articles which people either consume or wear can be traced back, directly or indirectly, to it. Whatever else, therefore, may be dispensed with, land cannot. It is essential to welfare. But manifestly the people dwelling within a given territory are assumed to be the owners of it. This, however, is not quite the case, for large parts of the land have been put into the hands of certain individuals. Some have paid a price for what they claim as their own; but the progenitors of the great majority of present landowners received the land as a gift, though under fairly well-defined conditions. They undertook certain burdens, and so long as they held the land, promised to bear these burdens. It is a question, then, for economists to consider whether these duties are being discharged. Welfare being dependent upon land, it is, indeed, a fair issue to raise, whether land should ever be placed in the hands of certain families for all time. The old Jewish Law provided that the land, whether gifted or bought, should revert to the original owner at the Sabbatical Year. Economists may hesitate as to the propriety of such a law being put into operation under present conditions; but since they freely discuss all matters that go to make a nation well or ill off, the land problem cannot be set aside as merely a question which extreme socialists have raised. To attempt a discussion of land, as some economists have tried to do, without considering the means by which it

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

came into the hands of the present holders of it, and the conditions under which it was placed at their disposal, is to raise academic issues which may or may not throw light upon the service that land renders. All that can be said respecting such service has been stated a thousand times; and, therefore, economists are obliged to give their best attention to, and impartially consider, the vital question whether those who draw large incomes from land are discharging all the duties to the State which they ought to fulfil.¹ Objections, we repeat, may be taken to raising this question, but it is as legitimate to demand consideration for it as it is to discuss such questions as a Graduated Income Tax, covering all incomes, even the highest; or as, who ought to bear the capital cost of all permanent improvements? and who ought to bear the cost of maintaining such improvements, when once made? Economists dealing with welfare, and land as necessary to it, cannot overlook the terms upon which land was originally given to certain persons without doing injustice to their science; and, indeed, however unwilling to deal with this question, it is

¹ Mrs. Simpson gives a record of a conversation she had with Mr. John Bright, and she reports him as saying:—"William the Third's four shilling in the pound land-tax was the best act of his reign." Vide *Many Memories of Many People*, p. 262. The rich manufacturer has no difficulty in proposing taxes on land, just as the landowner does not hesitate to pass measures which make great demands on the manufacturer. The latest writer on taxation is Mr. H. Lloyd Reid, who, in his work, *The British Taxpayer's Rights*, says that the model fiscal system would be a single tax on the value of accumulated wealth.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

being forced upon their consideration, and they are urged to give it a sober treatment.

A mistake would, however, be made if it were assumed that the land question can be easily settled. It has become exceedingly complicated; and among economists Ricardo is largely responsible for many of the false issues that have been raised. He laid down his well-known theory of rent, and from it drew a perfectly logical corollary. Rent, he said, is the difference in price between any given land and the poorest land in cultivation which yields no rent, or only a nominal rent. From this theory he drew the corollary that the products of agriculture would not be cheaper if rents were abolished, or, as it is sometimes put, the abolition of rent would not lower prices. The deduction is accurate enough, just as the theory is sound enough; but that which economists have pressed upon their attention is neither the one nor the other of these things. It is rather, whether land-owners, being allowed to draw rents, should not be obliged to implement the terms upon which they originally obtained possession of the land; whether the old land tax should not be re-imposed; or, as some, going still further, hold, whether the old economic rent and royalties, which amount to £300,000,000, should not be appropriated for the good of the State. This is really the most fundamental question that belongs to land. It is one primarily for economists; and no difficulty is experienced in trying to perceive how the answer given to it tells upon all other economic issues and upon social life.

(b) *Labour* is the second factor in producing real

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

wealth. In placing it second, economists do not, however, mean that it holds a place subordinate to land on the one hand, or to capital on the other. It is as essential as either. Almost all things can be multiplied by means of labour. Remuneration is assumed to be determined by the amount and value of one's labour. That is one of the dicta of economists; but obviously labour is not always so remunerated. The market price of labour enters as an element into a master's payment of labour rendered to him. Hence arise trades-unions, which have for their object combination and ultimately the raising of wages. As the medical and legal professions guard their supposed interests, working men also combine; and thus combinations have a great deal to do with the remuneration that is given for labour done. To say, therefore, that a workman's income is determined by the amount and value of his labour is only partially true; for the estimate of the worth of his services is constantly being changed by a great number of circumstances other than the work itself. So far, indeed, as economics deals with questions that affect the estimate of labour, it has no harder problem to solve than that of the standard to be applied to labour. Within recent years Karl Marx, following Ricardo, and after him almost all socialists have endeavoured to make labour the standard in terms of which all other things ought to be estimated; but labour is far too variable to become a standard. Sometimes it is mental, sometimes manual; and on this account it cannot be, as so many socialists maintain, the standard for all other things. But here we touch upon the question of exchange, and

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

must for a moment delay consideration of that which best estimates the worth of services rendered. It is enough meanwhile to say that ever since Adam Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*, pointed out the advantages of labour so far as it bears on production, economists have eagerly debated the question of remuneration due to labour; and that not without good reason, it is argued by many of them, a man's wages should be regulated by the amount of the profits which his labours do something to realize; for, to press the market price of labour generally issues in a minimum and not in a living wage.

(c) But labour cannot be discussed fully apart from *capital*; it also is essential to production. Economists are agreed in holding that the capitalist is entitled to remuneration for the risks he incurs, for the superintendence he gives to his business, and for what part of his wealth is put into use; but they are not agreed as to how much of the profits earned should be set against each of these three services. It is perhaps impossible to determine this question. It ought to be left to each master to settle it for himself; but manifestly where enormous profits are realized a master whose mind is informed by a sense of justice can have little difficulty in approximately ascertaining the proportion of the profits that belongs to the workmen. "The merchant prince" who has amassed a great fortune cannot have faced the ethical question, how much of his riches is due to ill-remunerated labour; for if he had, he could not have kept so much to himself; and it may be added, that it is the amassing of such fortunes which has done most

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

to create the social problems of the day ; for great riches to the few mean corresponding poverty to the many.¹ Nor is there anything that can take the place of an equitable sharing of profits due to master and workmen. To give doles of charity is not a substitute for doing justice. It may be said that these things have nothing to do with economics, to which we reply that economics not rooted in righteousness can never realize a right state of society ; and that it is mainly with the attainment of such a state that we are concerned.

2. The exchange of wealth next falls to be considered. This bears as directly upon social welfare as does the question of the production of wealth. Much has been written as to the articles which exchange the one for the other.² The means or agencies by which exchanges are carried on have also received attention ; but perhaps economists have written most voluminously with respect to the elements which enter into and determine the actual exchange of goods. The final word has been already spoken as to the first of these three subjects ; the second requires further elucidation and fuller treatment ; while the third is that about which much controversy necessarily takes place. The third is one of the most fundamental questions in economics, and can only be settled when

¹ "To-day a millionaire is respected ; there are signs that in future years a man leaving a huge fortune will be thought a semi-criminal."—*The Mind of the Master*, by John Watson, D.D., p. 331.

² Mr. Cannan gives an exhaustive list of the "kinds of things which can be exchanged," *op. cit.* pp. 28-31.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

great economic principles are applied to it. We shall have occasion in our next chapter to inquire how far individualism or socialism provides us with such principles. We advert briefly to the second subject here referred to; and when this is done, we shall mention those elements that enter into and determine exchanges, and point out their bearing on economics.

As to the means or agencies by which exchanges are carried on, these form a standard in terms of which goods pass from one person to another. At the present time gold or silver alone, or gold and silver are employed in most countries as the standard and measure of value. Jevons has enumerated the qualities which gold possesses,¹ and on account of which it is widely adopted as money. Many bi-metallists maintain that silver, coined and fixed at a definite ratio to gold, is as good a means for the exchange of commodities as gold. Countries, however, which have a gold standard are naturally slow to adopt bimetallism. Gold holds the field; for even where "credit" bills are employed the standard to which they refer is generally gold. In the transference of articles from one person to another about 95 per cent. of business is done by means of *paper*, but it is always assumed that gold lies behind the credit bills. Attention having been called to this modern development in the means of exchanges, economists have been obliged to consider the question, whether gold is really the best and only effective standard. Bimetallists have no difficulty in saying

¹ These are : utility, portability, indestructibility, homogeneity, divisibility, stability, cognisability.—*Money*, pp. 32-40.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

that silver is equally good ; but many economists, who regard bimetallism as only a step towards a further goal, hold that in the evolution of social life a time must come when gold shall cease to reign. It is extracted from the earth at enormous cost. Hundreds of lives are sacrificed for it. Lands are devastated to gain it. When coined, it at once assumes an artificial price. While other articles which may be worn or consumed, rise or fall in price, gold is maintained steady ; the artificial price given to it does not vary. These and other considerations have, therefore, forced economists to cast about for another standard. The claims of silver are urged ; but many economists believe that the standard should not be a single article ; it ought, they hold, to be the average price of a large number of articles. The elaborate tables of prices prepared by Soetbeer, Sauerbeck, and the *Economist* show how the average price could be ascertained ; and it is, therefore, maintained that in this standard greater justice would be secured in the exchange of commodities. What may be the ultimate standard can only, under present circumstances, be a matter of surmise ; but, as already said, the progress that is going on in the social evolution must also affect this fundamental question.¹ We have, however, chiefly to do with present conditions, and under them goods are generally exchanged by a reference to the gold standard.

In the actual exchanges many elements, as we have pointed out, enter in and determine them. Thus the

¹ This question is fully discussed in my *Money and Social Problems*.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

main factors in operation are:—the cost of producing articles, which again is affected by the price of raw materials, interest on the use of capital and the remuneration paid to labour rendered by master and servant; and the law of supply and demand, which explains the eager competition that is ever going on between those who have either goods or service to offer. It would take us too far afield to attempt, within the limits of this work, an elaborate discussion of all the issues that are embodied in these statements. Attempting, therefore, only a brief review of these issues, it can be easily shown how they bear on the economic conditions of life. It ought, however, to be said at the outset that insight into our subject is largely determined by our theory of value. Economists employ the words “intrinsic value,” “subjective value,” and “utility” interchangeably; their object in using any one of these phrases is to indicate the quality or qualities of any given article. But there is also another set of words that they constantly employ; for they speak of the “exchange value” or “the objective value” of an article when they wish to indicate its price. Making these distinctions, they draw from them inferences which tell directly upon economic questions. Thus it is said that there cannot be a general increase of values, and again that “a commodity cannot have more than one value in the medium of exchange.” These are truisms, though not in the sense in which economists generally express them. It is true, for instance, that there cannot be a general increase of values; but those who make this statement allow that values

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

may vary; and, according to them, some things may rise in value while others fall. Again, it is true that "commodities cannot have more than one value in the medium of exchange"; but if values vary, they must vary in terms of something; if the variation is, as many economists hold, made to depend upon the comparative plentifulness of given quantities of different commodities and the comparative estimation in which these commodities are held, or, in the case of material objects, upon the satisfaction which the use of them yields, then the variation will be stated in terms of the thing in which one's estimation is expressed. It may be in service, or in other commodities, or in money. But this is just another form of saying that all commodities have a price at a given time. Their value does not change; "a truly valuable or availing thing is that which leads to life with its whole strength. In proportion as it does not lead to life, or as its strength is broken, it is less valuable; in proportion as it leads away from life, it is unvaluable or malignant. The value of a thing is independent of opinion and of quantity."¹ The estimate or price of any given article may vary; prices do, indeed, constantly rise and fall; but the rise or fall always produces a corresponding movement in those factors which have produced the articles. The rise of the price of articles of consumption implies that the labour which has produced them is entitled to a higher rate of remuneration. General rises, therefore, imply a rise in the price of labour. Values cannot be otherwise estimated than

¹ *Unto This Last*, by John Ruskin, p. 118.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

by the price paid for the commodities which have valuable qualities. All attempts to define value assume that a process of exchange is going on; there must be buying and selling; and so it happens that when economists particularize the causes which regulate the value of all classes of commodities, they are obliged to acknowledge that "it will simplify the investigation if we use the word price instead of value."¹

A theory of value which limits the term *value* to the qualities in any given article that make for life, and employs the term *price* to express one's estimate of the worth of such an article, greatly aids the science of economics, since it frees discussion from many useless and hurtful side-issues, and enables the vital questions of the science to stand out in clear relief.

The problem which the economist has to solve is how the things which make for life can be put within the reach of the people; it is essentially concerned with questions of daily bread and welfare as means to well-being. Exchanges of commodities play an important part in realizing welfare. They are frequently used as means to secure advantages on the part of the unscrupulous. But even where there is an honourable desire to deal justly the economic conditions are often of such a kind as to make acts of injustice comparatively easy. Exchange is affected, as we have already stated, by the *price of raw material*, *interest on the use of capital* and *remuneration for labour*. We shall see how a severe individualist like

¹ Vide *Political Economy*, by M. G. Fawcett, p. 53.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Mr. Grant Allen¹ complains bitterly against the bar that is placed in the way of "access to a fair share of the common stock of raw material." The cost of such material affects exchanges, since every charge that is exacted for it tells against general welfare. No one can object to remuneration for the use of personal property or capital; objection can only be urged when remuneration takes the form of undue and unfair profits. Services, whether rendered by master or servant, have also an indefeasible claim to reward; and the abundance of fruit which attends labour makes payment of reward easy; for the provision that is made for man and beast is rich and abundant. It is only where man's selfishness enters that the legitimate earnings of labour are withheld.

No principle having the support of orthodox economists has lent itself so readily to the ministration of selfishness as that of "supply and demand." It has been claimed for this principle that its operations are beneficent; but the simplest test to apply to it is, how it actually works. In practice, under cover of its sanctions, some traders betake themselves to the cheapest markets where the shoddiest articles are sold, and these are taken to the dearest market and palmed off upon the unsuspecting buyer. There are economists who strenuously defend the operations of this law of supply and demand; if the scrupulous go to the wall or the unsuspecting suffer, why, that is their outlook; they should know better, and be on their guard. But if we select another illustration of its operation, it needs a good deal of courage to defend

¹ *Vide* p. 218.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

this law. Take sweating. The moral sense of men condemns the practice, and yet it may be defended if the law of supply and demand be a fair one; for the poor shirt-maker is not forced to toil; she does it willingly; her remuneration is small, and, therefore, her lot is hard; but complaint is useless, since her remuneration is strictly regulated by "supply and demand." Competition, too, with its ruthless conflicts, finds its justification in the dictates of this same law. It is not always or only workmen against master, but often workmen and master against workmen and master. In the fierce struggle, "cutting" is resorted to, with the result that the undersold are ill remunerated for their labour, while large gains are reaped by those who see keenly where self-interests lie. Hence, many do not hesitate to say that society based on such an economic foundation is bound to be rotten at the core; and certainly it is not surprising if these should set aside or overlook all higher things and make their loudest demand one for bread. If man has responsibilities and duties, he has also rights and privileges. He can, therefore, claim the right to live with a measure of comfort. This right must be insisted upon until it be conceded. It is, we allow, open to writers like Mr. Mallock¹ and Mr. Kebbel,² to argue for the recognition of the services which the wealthier classes and the aristocracy render. But it is unfair to offer the alternative, either of enormous rewards or of an equal and

¹ Vide *Aristocracy and Evolution: a Study of the Right, the Origin and the Social Functions of the Wealthier Classes.*

² Vide *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1898.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

universal living wage, and to write as if there were no other solution of social questions. The higher services ought to be rewarded, but the reward ought never to take a form which implies inadequate remuneration to any class of workers. Inadequate remuneration is made to many at the present time; hence the social question of the day. We do not say it is due to this alone, but certainly inadequate wages have much to do with it; and economists have no more serious task than that of getting rid of the too powerful sway of the law of supply and demand, and the fierce and unbrotherly competition to which it leads.

3. The question of the exchange of commodities runs into that of the distribution of wealth. It is customary to treat wealth as being distributed through rent, wages, and profit. We have already said all that the limits of our space permit us to state with respect to these three channels of distribution. It may, however, be remarked that while this division is accurate enough so far as it goes, it is not sufficiently exhaustive; for it does not include such modern developments as co-operation and profit-sharing. Neither does it take note of the distribution of goods by means of exchanges of articles which some countries produce in abundance for different articles which other countries abundantly produce. Distribution of wealth, too, is affected by such legislative Acts as make either for free trade or protection, profitably by free trade and adversely by protection. It is influenced likewise by taxation. When taxes are unequally imposed, the overburdened suffer. As the result of laws enacted

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

before the extension of the franchise, there are many instances of classes being largely free from obligations which they ought to bear ; but with the growth of truer economic conceptions the necessity for a more equitable imposition of taxes is being gradually recognised ; and in this the politician is being greatly aided by the economist, while both now profess to have in view what makes for the welfare of the people as a whole.

From what has been thus stated as to the scope of economics, it will be at once perceived that the science occupies a wide province. Within it absorbing human interests lie, and the practical questions which it raises present some of the most important issues to which one can turn attention. It is, however, impossible to form and pronounce anything like a final judgment upon these issues unless first of all a governing and interpreting economic principle be adopted. It is true that to the most comprehensive and exhaustive principle there will be exceptions, especially since human motives and desires enter as factors into all the problems that await solution ; but even while exceptions must be anticipated, it still holds good that one's economic standpoint goes a long way to determine one's attitude to all questions that arise. The two great governing economic principles, to one or other of which a general assent must be given, are individualism and socialism. We purpose, therefore, to examine in detail these two principles. Our object is to ascertain what of truth they contain, and what influence they have already exerted, as well as what influence they are likely to exert, upon human society.

VI

The Economic Basis of Society

INDIVIDUALISM

IN attempting to describe individualism, if one sees nothing of good in it, false generalizations are almost certain to be made. To differentiate the true from the false is by no means an easy or simple task. It may, however, help towards a correct differentiation if it be carefully noted that, when individualism is pushed to an extreme, and to the exclusion of other economic theories which seem to contradict it, great injury is done; that there are departments of social life in which it exercises a good influence; that where its influence is most legitimate it is not incompatible with the ends which socialism claims to have in view; and that, when applied to purely economic questions, justification for its sway is most difficult to discover.

We can, perhaps, best show what evidence there is for these statements, and give to individualism the most satisfactory treatment, if, *first*, we examine its genesis and development; *second*, enumerate its different types or forms; and, *third*, review those factors

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

that have made for its general acceptance, such as (a) the philosophy which has given it most support; (b) the commercial prosperity which has attended its practice; (c) its good influence in departments of life other than the purely economic; and (d) the optimistic view of human nature which its advocates have adopted; and *fourth*, whether the very rigidity with which the claims of individualism have been pressed, and the evils to which it has led, do not suggest the necessity for another and a higher economic principle, under the operations of which good work may be rendered, and society established on a firm basis.

I

The genesis and development of individualism form an instructive study. As to its origin, its roots lie deep, as we have already seen, in psychological and ethical data. The stages in its development are easily traced.

1. Man's natural or animal instincts incline powerfully towards self-gratification. Self is the centre of his world. He lives, or endeavours to live, for himself as far as that is possible; but man is more than an animal. He can make the highest thoughts and things the objects of his contemplation and search. *Ψυχή* and *πνεῦμα* are terms that describe what is most fundamental in human nature; for that which lies behind these terms constitutes the real self, and renders possible personal relationships on which, again, rest duties and rights, obligations and privileges.

2. Whatever psychological and ethical data may be

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

postulated, it is matter of history that men are early drawn into communities, and submit to laws which have for their end the common good of all. If any one, permitting his natural instincts to govern his actions, employs his position in society for self-aggrandisement, he violates these laws. Injustice is forthwith done to others, and sufferings inevitably ensue. The *pluses*, to use words first employed by Mr. Ruskin,¹ in the one case, imply *minuses* in the other. History is only too full of illustrations of selfishness. It has prevailed on a large scale among nations who have taken advantage of their superior arms to oppress the weak; and in industry it has a thousand times manifested its baleful influence, with the result that grasping greed has produced great misery and spelt loss to the many.

3. It has been seriously contended that human progress is only possible along the lines which individualism dictates; that this hitherto has been the path of society's development; and that along the same uneven and rough road progress must march. These are the conclusions of those whose chief tenet is, that whatever makes for personal gratification is right. Modern hedonists, in their last analysis of social facts, know nothing higher than refined egoism. With great ingenuity and much persistence they make the asseveration that all improvements and benefits which society now enjoys have come from the operations of individualism. Given human nature as it is, we are far from saying that the human race has not been tempted to travel along the path it has gone; for evil

¹ *Unto This Last*, p. 131.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

has entered into and disorganized human life ; and with the grave fact of sin before us, it may be concluded that no other course has been open to the race than that which has been adopted. This admission must not, however, be interpreted as implying that obedience to laws, higher than those which self-interests dictate, is not both possible and desirable. If, indeed, society is to attain a higher state of perfection, laws which have for their ends the suppression of what is selfish, and the encouragement of what ministers to the highest good of men, must be enforced and obeyed.

In dealing with the genesis and development of individualism, it is comparatively easy (*a*) to acknowledge the historical fact that it has long held sway ; (*b*) to discover a reasonable explanation of its reign ; and (*c*) to hold also that a higher principle of action may either greatly modify or ultimately supersede it.

(*a*) History supplies indubitable proof that society has long been under the influence and sway of individualism. The fact is obvious and well-attested.¹ (*b*) The explanation of its long reign is likewise simple enough ; for if the argument from analogy is legitimate, then the principles and truths, illustrated in other realms—such, for instance, as within the province of nature or art—suggest that a long period of preparation is necessary for the development of spiritual faculties and moral freedom. Human nature is not like pieces of a machine that can be fitted into their places. Political freedom cannot be conferred upon people untrained to the use of it. A highly developed form of

¹ *Vide* p. 187.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

civilization is ill suited to savage communities; and even in civilized states it seems to be a law of progress that the people who form such states must learn through a hard and drastic experience that obedience to selfish instincts does not yield the highest results. But however much these statements express truisms, it must not be assumed that far greater progress than anything yet attained may not be reached by obedience to high ethical laws, which in their operations and influence are as different from self-aggrandising motives as the clear and invigorating air of the mountain tops is from the foetid atmosphere of the marshy swamp.

(c) These higher laws may greatly modify individualism or ultimately supersede it. Their reign is possible; for the very conception of law even in its crudest form necessitates the imposition of restriction upon the individual. In whatever manner civil laws may have been enacted, the enforcement of them necessarily puts a check upon the operations of individualism. Man, living in communities which are governed by legal enactments that have received general consent, is free, but only within the limits which the laws prescribe. The higher the law the greater the restrictions imposed, and the summit of the ascending scale is reached when the principle of brotherhood is in full operation; for then the considerations which influence conduct are not thoughts of personal gain, but rather what makes for the highest good of the brotherhood. This is attained by each one working for the welfare and well-being of his fellows; and this, we may add, is the ideal

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

of Christianity explained, enforced and illustrated by its Founder. Jesus lived wholly and entirely for the good of others. He proved that a life of self-sacrifice is possible, and He called, and still calls, His followers to strive to attain this life. It may be said that this ideal is too Utopian; but the alternatives of which choice must be made are: either Christianity is true and eminently reasonable, or it is a vague dream, and the hopes of Christendom vain. For our part, we believe that the time is coming when God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Christianity aims at the reorganization of society by means of the principles of love and righteousness. It insists upon a personal trust in a personal Saviour in order that all who trust in Him may be fellow-workers in realizing the Divine Purpose; and until the will of God is regnant everywhere that Purpose cannot be thought of or spoken of as fulfilled. That these are not idle dreams, history itself bears witness; for submission to the most primitive forms of law is a recognition that man's good is partially attained by obedience to them, and that higher laws may be advantageously imposed. No matter how small the communities may be, or how limited in operation the laws which govern them, such submission and the possibility of imposing such laws are prophecies of still higher social organizations, and of obedience to an ever-ascending scale of laws, until the laws of love and righteousness are reached. The realization of a perfect state of society belongs to the future; as yet it is only a goal seen in the distance; but well-founded hopes are great inspiring motives, and, sustained by

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

them, the followers of Christ, if true to His teachings and His example, shall ultimately reach the goal.

No one who looks to Christianity for a satisfactory solution of social questions can easily or consistently believe that its final aim is unrealizable. There are, however, many who bear the Christian name and yet seem to cherish the conviction that individualism is the one and safe method of social progress. Within recent years the number of these is gradually decreasing. Experience is slowly teaching them to modify their opinions; still they look askance at anything which has even the appearance of socialism, and with great hesitation allow concessions to their opponents. Some, indeed, positively refuse to move from the old position; individualism, in their judgment, has too much to recommend it, and cannot be even modified. These stand in direct opposition to those who have accepted socialism as the sole method of social improvement. Both represent extremes; they take one-sided views of social movements, and see things with a distorted vision. But they do more than represent extremes. The very intensity with which they hold their convictions prevents them from weighing the questions at issue. Their dogmatism is a bar to progress. But if anywhere an "open mind" is required, it is most of all needed in considering the economic foundation of society. The Master of Balliol, in the address already quoted,¹ has pointed out that, as in philosophy and religion extreme and dogmatic positions are no longer tenable, so in economics, when abstract questions are brought to the touchstone of

¹ *Individualism and Socialism*, pp. 7, 8.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

experience, dogmatic positions are rendered almost impossible; and that social problems ought to be approached in a critical spirit of scientific investigation, each worker in the social field having it as his aim to ascertain how the State or Municipal authorities can most effectively and safely interfere with individuals without weakening or pauperizing them. The need for caution is quite obvious, but it can scarcely be said that the warning which Professor Caird has given is generally heeded. Individualism is insisted upon, and many forms of it are advocated with great ingenuity and persistence.

II

We purpose, therefore, to notice some of its forms. Our object is to see the character and claims of individualism as an economic theory. There are individualists of the Liberty and Property Defence League type. These lay undue emphasis upon the sacredness of the rights of property. The social fabric is, in their view, rendered utterly insecure if property be touched; and accordingly they lay the greatest stress upon defending its rights. Others, again, hold by a form of individualism which obliges them to object to the position of the Liberty and Property Defence League. Mr. Grant Allen may be taken as representative of this class. He inveighs vigorously against the individualists of the League. He calls himself an individualist of the old school, and takes exception to the institution of Free Libraries and School Boards, and the imposition of heavy municipal taxation; but

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

he holds that individualism "is only logically and consistently possible if it starts with the postulate that all men must, to begin with, have a free and equal access to the common gifts and energies of nature—soil, water, air, sunshine; and to the common stock of raw material—stone, wood, coal, metal."¹ In Mr. Grant Allen's judgment persons "who 'own landed property' are clearly aggressors upon the equal rights of others, impeding them in the free exercise of their energies and activities, and debarring them from their natural equal rights of access to a fair share of the common stock of raw material." "True property," he says, "consists of the product of labour, and it can be owned only by the producer himself, or by a person to whom the producer himself has freely given, bartered, or bequeathed it. To have stolen or plundered it gives no real title." According to Mr. Grant Allen, had what he calls *true* individualism held sway, landlordism, with all its attendant evils, would have been unknown.

It is worthy of notice that Dr. Plumptre, whose attitude "towards ideas and projects that bear the stamp of socialism" is one of "intelligent and watchful sympathy," attributes the evils of which Mr. Grant Allen complains to the operations of individualism. "The fierce individualism of the Teutonic races," he says, "showed itself in the acquisition of landed estates by conquest and confiscation to an extent which almost justifies Proudhon's axiom, the watchword of extreme socialism, *La propriété c'est le vol*, itself an echo of Ambrose's teaching, that 'usurpation has created private

¹ *Vide* "Individualism and Socialism," *Cont. Rev.* May 1889.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

property'; of Jerome's saying, that 'every rich man is either an evildoer himself or the heir of an evildoer.' The landed property of Europe had, for the most part, its origin in robbery and wrong."¹ Thus the Dean of Wells traces the usurpation of land to a form of individualism which Mr. Grant Allen holds to be no part of *true* individualism, since it implies "aggression upon the equal rights of others." There is not, however, so much difference between Dr. Plumptre and Mr. Grant Allen as appears at first sight; for the latter really holds much in common with socialists; and the explanation is found in the operations of a principle which Mr. Sharp McKechnie points out when he says that the sphere of individualism which lays stress upon the *equality* of individuals instead of upon their *liberty* readily passes over into socialism."²

Most individuals would perhaps hesitate to accept either the individualism of the Liberty and Property Defence League, or that of Mr. Grant Allen. The most common form is that which has for its chief feature, opposition to governmental interference. Let governments have nothing to do with the production and distribution of wealth, and all will be well. This is, generally speaking, the attitude which individualists adopt. When this position is carefully examined, it is found to have its support sometimes in purely economic considerations, and sometimes in ethical postulates. During the reign of the deductive method individualism was almost the only creed professed;

¹ "Christianity and Socialism," *Cont. Rev.* Nov. 1889.

² Vide *The State and the Individual*, p. 181.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

but some, like Ricardo, limited themselves to the purely economic aspect of things; while others, following Adam Smith, identified the economic laws, of which individualism is the expression, with a Divine arrangement. This was a most comforting doctrine, and when buttressed by either religious or ethical arguments, it is easy to perceive with what fervour it would be held. The application, however, of the inductive method to economics produced great changes. Applied almost at the same time as the industrial revolution was taking place, and when social reformers like Lassalle were carefully studying Hegel's theory of the State, and thus preparing the way for socialism, the observation of social facts and generalizations made upon them, soon rendered it manifest enough that, an economic theory which bade governments stand aside was indefensible, no matter what religious or ethical support it might lay claim to, or what advantages it conferred on the few.

But the changes came slowly. Governments, it was gradually allowed, had duties; they were, however, of a negative rather than of a positive kind; all that was required of governments was to guard against fraud and violence; but the rights of individuals, it was strenuously maintained, must be kept intact. No account was taken of the fraud and violence which individuals, in seeking their own selfish ends, might inflict upon the masses of the people, the poor and defenceless women and children, who were obliged to toil from morning till night to eke out a livelihood. That was not the province of the State; and if in an unfortunate moment Parliament should

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

interfere, matters would only be rendered worse. Out of this hard and fast conception of the State's province grew the theory of rights. Little or no stress was laid upon duties; rights alone were held sacred; if duties were named at all, it was only to say that they were negative. Thus, competition assumed ethical authority. The contest as between those who enjoyed equal rights was perhaps fair enough; but as between those who had them and those who did not possess them, the struggle was unequal and unfair. But notwithstanding the unfairness of the terms of the conflict, the claim was made that not only should competition be allowed, but also encouraged to the utmost extent. The Manchester school of politicians pressed this claim. Cobden and Bright became the representatives of the school, and carried their contention to its logical issue. They readily adopted, and with great eloquence defended, the dictum of Adam Smith, that wages must find their level through the operations of the law of supply and demand; and their motto was, "Buy in the cheapest, and sell in the dearest market."

No one acquainted with the brilliant political service which Cobden and Bright rendered can withhold from them gratitude and esteem; but their distinguished labours ought not to blind us to the narrow economic conceptions which they entertained. Perhaps the most satisfactory, as well as the fairest, explanation of their conduct may be found in the circumstance that, while they were eminent as politicians, they do not seem to have given much attention to economic studies. They certainly adopted the popular economic

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

ideas of their time, and in a somewhat rough and ready manner applied them. They appear to have anticipated little of the results of the services which later economists have rendered ; and they were, therefore, scarcely in a position for looking with unbiassed minds at economic principles, more socialistic than individualistic in their character. Unlike Stuart Mill, whose sympathetic attitude towards his opponents enabled him to see new light cast on old problems, and whose courage made him risk the reproofs of orthodox economists, they were wedded to ideas and to ways of looking at things which made it almost impossible for them to see good in any movement which was not individualistic. As their one-sided economic views wrought out in practice, reckless competition followed ; and a minimum wage, which could scarcely keep soul and body together, was, in thousands of instances, the labourer's reward for his toil.

Cobden and Bright, however, unintentionally rendered one good service ; for, by pressing extreme economic ideas, and teaching their followers to press them to their logical conclusion, they caused "the moral sense of the élite of men" to rise in revolt against the theory of a minimum wage, and against that of the market price of labour. Those who thus rose in revolt were not always able to give a rational explanation of the demand for a wage that would enable them to live with a measure of comfort ; but they knew that the demand was reasonable, and many trained economists now acknowledge it to be fair. Nor did they always perceive the ground for rejecting

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

the theory of the market price of labour; but here, again, they knew that man cannot be placed in the same scale with commodities; he has a spiritual nature and moral faculties, and in virtue of these has claims upon his fellows, for which individualism, with its severe competition, makes no provision. The Manchester school, indeed, offered an object lesson with respect to these things which perhaps did more than anything else to call attention to both the *duties* and the *rights* of men. There are few, for instance, at the present time who can have any sympathy with Cobden and Bright in their vehement denunciations of the legislative proposals of Lord Shaftesbury, who laboured tirelessly for the amelioration of the lot of women and children, and ultimately succeeded in placing on the Statute Book the Factory Acts, which have done so much for the poor and defenceless. No person would now venture to return to the old condition of things which those Acts changed. On the contrary, it is now recognised by all political parties that their operation has effected much good. But it goes without saying that Parliament would have been appealed to in vain had the duty of the State towards those who were powerless to protect themselves not been insisted upon by Lord Shaftesbury and his many fellow-workers in politics and literature. Neither the fervour of Cobden, nor the eloquence of Bright could arrest the progress of the saner economic principles which social reformers advocated. The partial victory which was thus won, and has been already fruitful of further socialistic measures, was due to the sound economic basis on which appeals for the amelioration

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of the poor rested, and to the labours of the distinguished men who willingly spent their lives in advocating great and salutary economic changes.

III

We have now to consider the factors that have operated in favour of individualism. An economic theory, which has obtained so extensively as individualism, must have much to recommend it; otherwise it could not have held the field so long as it has done. Accordingly, when we attempt an explanation of its reign, we discover several important factors which account for its sway.

(a) Individualism owes much to utilitarian philosophy. We cannot make a hard and fast statement, and say that all utilitarians have been individualists. Within the economic sphere, as in many other domains, there are exceptions to every rule, but generally it may be maintained that individualism is more closely allied to utilitarianism than to any other moral theory. It is, indeed, something more than a remarkable coincidence that utilitarianism and individualism have developed on parallel lines. We have already adduced historical evidence for the notable circumstance that periods of religious indifference and political inactivity synchronize with the reign of utilitarianism.¹ We have now to point out that as in religion the logical development of the theory of utility is towards Deism, or Agnosticism, or the negation of religion altogether, so in economics

¹ *Vide* pp. 131-2.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

it generally makes for individualism. There have been, it is true, "theological utilitarians," like Brown, J. Clarke, and Paley, but these, as we have already shown, have had few followers. Their religious views ill suited their moral theories. On the other hand, there have been writers, like Stuart Mill, who, while holding by utilitarian principles, have declared for modified forms of socialism; but these writers, as in Stuart Mill's case, have been won over to socialism despite their philosophy. Certainly Mill has made it manifest enough that he changed his attitude towards socialism not on philosophic grounds, but because his study of social phenomena left him no other alternative.¹ An intuitionist may be an individualist, but not consistently, for the moral law which he professes to obey lays upon him obligations to respect and care for the interests of his fellows, not because, as hedonists say, good will thereby come to himself, but because it is right. If an idealist favours individualism, it is only temporarily, for "the intrinsically desirable form of conscious life" which he desiderates can only be realized through society; in his view, individualism is not a final economic theory of life; it is only one of those differences which a deeper unity reconciles, and that with the object of attaining to a higher end.

Individualism is mainly dependent upon utilitarianism. The dependence, indeed, of the economic theory of individualism upon the moral theory of utilitarianism is easily perceived. They are logically related to each other, and have certain affinities which

¹ *Vide* Stuart Mill's *Autobiography*, pp. 61, 162, 231, 232.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

associate them together. The utilitarian says that whatever ministers to pleasure is right. The individualist declares that self-interest ought to govern actions. The former tests and tries everything by the useful; the latter finds his element in what makes for self-enrichment. The two theories go hand in hand. The history of moral philosophy abundantly verifies the close relationship which subsists between them. Shaftesbury, the first moralist who gave to intuitionism a philosophic treatment, strongly maintained that to seek the good of others is that which alone has moral quality; and in emphasizing altruism he was closely followed by almost all later intuitionists. Their moral postulates necessitated a wide field of action; for, the moral law, while dealing with the individual, requires him to act justly towards his neighbour. On the other hand, Adam Smith, whose influence on economics has been greater than that of any other moralist, and most directly towards individualism, though in morals something of an eclectic, adopted Hume's theory of "sympathy," and traced moral sentiments to utilitarian principles. Bentham, the most systematic exponent of utilitarianism, boldly declared that the happiness of the individual is the end of life, and is even "the end and sole end of the legislature." The writings of all other utilitarians exhibit an equally strong drift towards individualism. At the present time there is scarcely a single representative exponent of hedonism who is not also an individualist. It could not, indeed, be otherwise, where men aim at consistency of exposition of moral and economic data. Mrs. Rhys Davids says of Pro-

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

fessor Croom Robertson that, while "holding by an enlightened Experimentalism, he was repelled by the individualism prevailing in Experimental doctrine from Locke till the present century."¹ That which Professor Robertson experienced, all who have a bias towards utilitarianism must also experience, if at the same time they are attracted towards socialism; for socialism is inconsistent with that moral theory which offers no higher motives to human actions than self-interest.

Thus, whether the essential elements of utilitarianism or its history be considered, it is manifest enough that individualism owes much to it. Its advocates can point to a long line of illustrious writers who, while writing chiefly on moral questions, have indirectly given it support; and it cannot, therefore, be a matter of wonder that many people have adopted individualism as the best of all economic theories. Within recent years utilitarianism has rather fallen into disrepute; at least, few of the most distinguished moralists of the day advocate its claims. Idealism has largely supplanted it; and this may partly explain the circumstance that those who hold life to be governed by an *end* are now also among the social workers, and eager to find a solution for the social questions of the times. Idealists are certainly most sympathetic in dealing with poverty; some of them, too, are eager social reformers. There are, however, hedonists with us still. These have taken the place of the older utilitarians; and it must

¹ *Introduction* to Professor Croom Robertson's *Elements of General Philosophy*, by C. A. Foley Rhys Davids, M.A.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

be admitted that to make the gratification of egoistic desires the end of life is natural enough: it is that which man, if ungoverned by higher motives, naturally aims at; and when backed by a school of philosophy once powerful, it is easy to perceive how individualism long held sway, and is still maintained.

(b) The commercial prosperity which has attended the practice of individualism is another factor which partly explains its influence and general acceptance. Under its ægis trade has been carried on and greatly developed. The energy that is born of this eager desire "to get wealth" has produced material prosperity. It has to a large extent made commerce what it is to-day. Whatever religion men may have professed, or whatever standard of human life they may have acknowledged, the great majority of them have been true to the claims of individualism, and many of them have been successful in amassing riches. The success which has crowned their efforts has been the best justification of the economic principle which they have adopted; and, therefore, they claim that the advantages reaped from flourishing trade supply indubitable evidence of the soundness of the economic basis on which commerce rests. We admit that the operations of individualism within the economic sphere have issued in great wealth; but the mere getting of wealth is not a justification of any economic theory. Material riches do not satisfy man's deepest needs; they are of all things perhaps the least satisfying; of much use in their own place, they yet leave whole domains of man's nature un-

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

touched, unless by way of preventing him from responding to the claims of his higher nature.

But those who find support for individualism in the material prosperity that has accompanied its operations are apt to forget that while the condition of the working classes has been improved, the great advantages that have come from extended commerce have been enjoyed mainly by the few. They overlook, too, the hard, harsh, and unbrotherly competitions which individualism necessitates. They take little or no note of the tens of thousands who can scarcely eke out a livelihood; and so far as the great social evils which are the bane and curse of society are concerned, they never seem even for a moment to reflect that the eager desire "to get wealth" has anything to do with them. It would be a simple task to employ rhetorical language in describing the hard lot of the very poor. That has often been done; there is, indeed, only too much reason for doing it; and whoever sympathizes with them in their sufferings has a difficulty in restraining himself. We do not attempt the task. It is perhaps more useful to point out that, in the evolution of society, a higher stage than that of mere self-aggrandisement must yet be reached, and that many things are making for it in the slow evolution of society.

Society is moving slowly towards the realization of many socialistic ideals. It is worthy of note that the social condition of the working classes began to improve when economic principles other than individualistic were adopted by Parliament, municipal bodies, and combinations of workmen. This, indeed,

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

deserves the closest attention at the hands of those who are watching the development of social movements and the progress of society. It may, we are aware, be contended that the industrial revolution, which ran on almost parallel lines with the social, did more than anything else to improve the condition of the working classes; but while due importance must be attached to mechanical invention, and consequent saving of manual labour, it still holds good that, if socialistic principles had not been applied, the advantages accruing from the use of improved machinery would have been still more largely reaped by one class. The modified application of socialism both by Parliament and municipal bodies has, however, produced a division of profits, not so large or equable as ought perhaps to be made, but yet a division that had meant for all labourers greater comforts and better social conditions; and these, again, have been the strongest recommendations for collective organizations on the part of working men, to many who otherwise would not have looked kindly on their claims, as they are also pledges that society shall ultimately obey economic laws under which greater wealth shall be produced, and a fairer division be made among all who have laboured for its production.

(c) If within the purely economic sphere individualism cannot be easily justified, and that chiefly because it has operated so exclusively, there are many things which can be urged in its favour in relation to other departments of human life. Much, indeed, can be said on its behalf, and especially for the con-

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

tention that, rightly understood, it operates towards those ends which socialism professes to have in view. The elements which enter into and give stability to society cannot be interpreted if individual rights and duties be left out of account. The benefits, civil and religious, which the operations of individualism have secured cannot be rightly estimated if care be not taken to ascertain how they have been won, and are still maintained. Thus, a direct and powerful claim has been made for individual liberty. There are well-defined limits within which the individual's liberty is sacred. He is free to enter into contracts, provided he does not deprive his fellows of their liberty. He may combine with others in voluntary associations which have for their aim the good of all the members of these associations. The very idea of moral accountability carries with it that of freedom. Where there is no liberty there is no responsibility. A person, therefore, may choose his own course in life; the objects he will pursue; how he will spend his time and employ his energies; and what he will do with his own earnings and possessions. Great aid is, indeed, rendered to true socialism when individualism is thus rightly considered; for it then becomes evident that if socialism is ever to be anything other than a mere theory, it must gather strength and authority from voluntary combination. Parliament cannot regenerate society by legal enactments. Acts of Parliament cannot produce altruism. They are only effective when they are the records of a free people. All who see the golden age in the future, and not in any period of the past, must believe that a time is

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

coming when the benefits which brotherliness secures shall be regarded as ample justification for the majority legislating for social laggards. It is, however, an inversion of the laws of nature, and still more of the laws of moral government, to begin with Acts of Parliament, and hope thereby to effect salutary social changes. The people must first be prepared; and individualism, in its assertion of the rights of voluntary associations which operate beneficially for all who belong to them, prepares the way for a cordial meeting between socialism and itself. But this is just, in other words, to say that moral progress precedes legal enactments, to which, if they be depended upon alone, enthusiasts look in vain for the regeneration of society.

In another department of human life individualism has justified its claims. It has insisted upon freedom of conscience. This is man's right, and is inalienable. No one has moral authority for seeking to enforce upon others a creed, the contents of which are unacceptable to them. At a great cost this freedom has been vindicated. It is the last thing which a lover of truth will surrender. Experience, however, shows that the voice of conscience may be silenced by a course of vicious living. Submission to one's lower nature always issues in moral slavery and in the loss of moral power; but few people are reduced to such a low moral state that the voice of conscience is not at least indistinctly heard. Its power is very great, and its rule is always on the side of the right; but battling constantly with evil, it needs aid. A Revelation which contains a message of grace is a necessity, if

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

man is to respond to the claims of conscience. This deep necessity explains the exceeding reasonableness of Christianity; for it is pre-eminently distinguished by its gracious message. It informs the mind and strengthens conscience by illuminating it. In its light, man attains to true freedom. He sees in Christianity the higher laws, obedience to which is the guarantee of liberty; for no one is ever so free as when he consents to obey laws which make for the highest good. Obedience to a will higher and better than one's own is the truest freedom. The wayward will of a child corrected by the stronger and wiser will of a parent, is an illustration in point. With these explanations freedom of conscience is an inalienable right. It makes for righteousness; and since there is nothing else which gives greater stability to society than actions dictated by righteousness, individualism, by insisting upon the rights of conscience, is an important factor in social relationships. Here, however, individualism is not so entirely inconsistent with socialism as at first sight it may seem to be; for within the province sacred to conscience it operates towards those ends which socialism likewise claims to have in view. When, indeed, conscience is so enlightened that obedience to the highest of all laws, namely, those of righteousness and love, becomes comparatively easy, a strong moral force is set in action that makes for altruism, and the realization of a true brotherly state ceases to be a fond dream, for it is at hand.

Individualism, again, in so far as it emphasizes the rights of property, has abundant justification. A person has a right to use his own earnings as he

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

chooses. The property which is the fruit of his own labours, or that of those who bequeathed it, must be left to his own disposal. There are few individualists, however, who defend the present distribution of land and capital. We have already seen that Mr. Grant Allen, who claims to be a thorough-going individualist, is at one with Dr. Plumptre in maintaining that much of the property now held was literally laid hold of by the strongest without moral authority. But such property apart, the right to property that has been legitimately earned must be allowed. This does not mean that there is no moral blame attached to the arbitrary wasting of one's possessions; for individualists must recognise, with socialists, that property is a trust. It is at the owner's disposal, but he is at the same time a steward, and responsible for the use he makes of his means. He may be selfish, and therefore an unjust steward; if, however, he is faithful, then he will employ his possessions not merely or chiefly for his own gratification, but also for the good of others. Thus property cannot be considered apart from ethical laws; and whenever these are taken into account, a great step in advance is made towards the position which the socialist desiderates, when he insists upon living for the good of others.

(d) Unfortunately the idea of stewardship has not obtained to any great extent in purely economic questions. Overlooking obligations, the individualist has found, or at least has professed to find, a basis for his theory in the happy optimism which he entertains.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

This optimism has not received so much attention as it deserves; it is worthy of special consideration. It is, for instance, assumed that human nature is good and natural impulses pure. That which has destroyed both, so far as commercial transactions are concerned, is governmental interference. Let the restraints of the law be removed, let competition and natural inclination have free play, and individualism, it is contended, will prove itself equally good in practice as in theory. The essential goodness of human nature is, however, a large assumption. The hard and stern facts of human life are against it. The animal nature in man, when ungoverned by high moral motives, is not essentially good, but evil. History a thousand times has proved that man needs the restraints of law; for whenever they are removed anarchy ensues. Man, it is true, is capable of responding to moral motives; kindly affections, such as those which the family life produces, do most frequently dictate unselfish actions. But in this case there is in operation the law of love. Where there is no law enforced, selfish instincts assert themselves; and man stands in need of restraints. The happy optimism, therefore, which so many individualists cherish, so far as it relies upon the goodness of human nature, has little support; and if individualism is ever to accomplish the regeneration of society, human nature must be entirely changed. Indeed the lesson so often read to socialists, might well, even with more reason, be pressed upon individualists; for nothing is more common, especially with those who look unfavourably upon all socialistic proposals, than to

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

insist that if socialism is ever to prevail a highly developed morality is first necessary. Without venturing to controvert this truism, it may be permissible to remark that, if socialism is impossible until human nature has been greatly improved, then those whose economic theory rests upon the happy optimism we are considering can really have no basis for the creed they profess; for it is the same human nature with which they have to deal.

But the individualist's optimism necessitates a further and still greater assumption, namely, that the *summum bonum* of all classes is secured by each man seeking his own personal gain. It is possible to conceive the highest good of men being attained if each man subordinates his desires to the general welfare; but how the maximum of personal gain can work out the good of all, in any given state of society, is an economic enigma. Personal gain for the most part means personal aggrandisement, and that too, at the expense of the interests of others. To respond to the claims of brotherhood, and give one's life to service, is, as Christ taught—and He revealed the perfect life—the Divine method of realizing a right social state; but the opposite of this method is that which the optimism of individualists assumes; and it is claimed that the perplexing social questions of the day can be solved by adopting it. But though a contradiction of all that is true in economics, it would argue a want of knowledge if one were to conclude, that the method dear to individualists could be as easily dismissed as its unreasonableness seems to warrant; for it rests upon the arguments which are so frequently en-

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

countered in the study of social phenomena; *first*, that to seek one's own happiness is to be "on the right road to the greatest happiness of the greatest number;" and, *second*, that the laws which govern the animal world apply also to the social, the progressive stages of which are—"struggle for existence," "survival of the fittest," and ultimately a perfectly developed state of society as the outcome of the fierce struggle and ruthless competition. No higher laws intervene; the cosmic is the same as the ethical process; they are not even two sides of the same thing, but one and identical. The optimism which sees in human nature only that which is good is far astray from the truth, but it is equally at fault in holding that society based upon either hedonism or natural law, to the exclusion of the moral and spiritual, can endure.

In pointing out the postulates which the individualist's optimism makes, and in showing how little support they have, we are far from saying that individualism itself, or when modified by socialism, has not many good elements which ought to be recognised. Our aim is rather to emphasize the fact that, in future sociological developments individualism, in its hard and fast form, cannot dominate, as it has done in the past, the great departments of human life—politics, commerce and religion. In these it has too long and too exclusively ruled. Until within quite recent times, Parliament was not so much concerned with passing Reform Bills or socialistic measures as with preserving and extending the rights of the privileged. In commerce, individualism was held to be the one economic principle which effected the greatest expan-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

sion of trade, and secured the greatest amount of material progress. In religion, too, it made its influence distinctly felt. Personal safety was made an end, and not only a means to larger freedom and greater service. The Church, says Canon Scott Holland, "was hypnotized by the glamour of the older Political Economy. The classes from which she drew her clergy are just those who were most profoundly penetrated by the individualistic formulæ which dominated the schools at the time of this educational moulding."¹

IV

But the very rigidity with which the arguments employed in support of individualism have been pressed, has perhaps done more than anything else to disclose its defects, and to cause social reformers to cast about for another principle which they can more cordially accept. Already the conception of unity is seen to be the interpreting idea of history, and that of which legislation must be the expression. The solidarity which it assumes has indeed been translated into legislative Acts; and these, operating powerfully upon society, are producing slowly but surely great social changes. The conflict is severe enough, but the issues at stake are quite plain. In the past the operations of individualism account for many wars; for the fiercest struggles that have ever been carried on, have been those for conquest of land. To the same operations the basest acts of fraud can also be traced; for

¹ Vide *Progressive Review*, January, 1897.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

in the eager desire to get wealth worthless articles have been palmed off upon unsuspecting purchasers. Individualism, too, is largely responsible for the exploitation of the weak and poor by the strong and rich. It even lies at the root of a form of democracy which has been advocated by many earnest, albeit imperfectly informed, reformers, who, insisting upon a narrow view of life, have made progress on a large scale almost impossible ; for " if men set out upon the hypothesis, on which so many democrats build, of the atomistic independence of the individual—each man's rights to be asserted separately, one man as good as another ; no man superior to another ; and every man his own master, with no higher authority than his own caprice—the future of the world cannot be contemplated with hope." ¹ But signs are not wanting that the evils just indicated are being gradually removed ; that at least they can never again have the support from good men which they formerly received ; and that the partial application of socialistic principles has effected many social improvements. Here, indeed, as elsewhere, two truths are being illustrated ; *first*, that the extravagant claims of extreme and abstract theorists produce more harm than good ; and, *second*, that while one extreme is apt to lead to another, a synthesis of all that is good in both alone makes for the highest and most lasting benefits. The acceptance of a *via media* or golden mean does not, however, imply that one may not be more of a socialist than an individualist or *vice versa*. A balance of benefits

¹ Vide *Ænigma Vitæ*, by John Wilson, p. 10.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

may belong to one economic theory rather than to the other; but whatever theory is adopted, the good in its opposite ought to be acknowledged.

Thus, one who perceives that the claims of brotherhood are imperative must also admit that individualism has rendered many excellent services; for experience proves that individual initiative in the study of nature and in the effort to discover its laws; in politics, where the foresight of the statesman who sees deepest into the workings of economic principles effects reforms and thus provides better conditions for the development of character; and in commerce, where energy and genius expand trade and multiply real wealth, has conferred great and lasting benefits upon mankind. But the student of social phenomena who adopts a sympathetic attitude towards socialism must also recognise that these benefits have not, in any instance, been secured apart from strenuous toil and great diligence; and that such endeavours imply self-control, which, again, is one of the highest of moral attainments. If gifted with capacity for discriminating rightly where principles and practice seem to be in antagonism, he must also allow that a person who gives his time and energies to fruitful labours, and, indeed, all who work, whether great success crown their efforts or not, have a right to the fruit of their toil; and that all must be left free to use it according to the best of their judgment. The only thing which he can legitimately desiderate is that care must be taken that they do not trench upon the privileges of their fellows. And he must further grant, that room

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

ought to be left for healthy rivalry and fair competition in order to produce the best results, though here again he will insist upon ethical principles governing all operations. He must, therefore, admit that initiative, diligence, and self-control are qualities which the operations of individualism have done much to stimulate and develop.

But while frankly making these acknowledgments one is not, however, under the necessity of concluding that these qualities could not have been otherwise called into play and developed. Other motives might have evoked these qualities in still higher perfection. You might, it may be urged, stimulate men to the highest forms of energy by approbation; for if self-interests have acted as powerful motives, the very highest and most disinterested kinds of work have already been performed, because the doers of them have felt that they were engaged in honourable service. Witness the labours of statesmen, physicians, and philanthropists. The services which these render are not measured by mercenary gains. The approbation which accompanies work well done is one of their greatest rewards; and for their work's sake they are held in higher esteem than the person who is engaged in amassing riches. "The essential reason," says Mr. Ruskin, "for such preference will be found to lie in the fact that the merchant is presumed to act always selfishly. His work may be necessary to the community; but the motive of it is understood to be wholly personal."¹ Or, the

¹ *Unto This Last*, p. 28.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

claims of brotherhood might be pressed as motives to service. No man lives unto himself. Subtle relationships bind man to man, and where the privileges of brotherhood are recognised the most powerful incentives are present, spurring one on to diligent labours and self-control. Or, the idea of duty may be so presented that it at once imparts a strong ethical force. This was one of the great motives which Christ set before His followers. In one of His most beautiful parabolical sayings He taught them to look upon themselves as servants who, when they had done their duty, would confess, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which is our duty to do."¹ We have not yet reached, it must be admitted, the stage in moral development where these highest motives are wholly operative, but it is a great gain to see that they are realizable. Man attains to perfection slowly. Through a hard and long experience he is, however, gradually reaching it. "The education of human beings is one of the most difficult of all arts."² As society is at present constituted, and man is at his present stage of development, individualism is an important element in human progress. It marks a definite stage in the advance, but even its most fervent advocates must acknowledge that it is not the highest. All who have it as their aim to understand the founda-

¹ Luke xvii. *Unprofitable*, ἀχρεῖος, is not used here in an unfavourable sense; it does not mean *poor*, *mean*, *despicable*, but rather that one has done no more than was to be expected from a servant.

² Stuart Mill in *Fortnightly Review*, April, 1879.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

tions upon which society rests, must recognise its good elements as well as its defects; but, again, when these are fully set out, it needs to be said that the highest ends of life can only be reached through brotherly service.

VII

The Economic Basis of Society

SOCIALISM

IN the preceding chapter the main features and outstanding characteristics of individualism have been delineated. What is good and true in the theory has been indicated, and its defects have also been pointed out. In this chapter we attempt an examination of the claims of socialism. To ascertain what is distinctive of this economic theory, to see clearly the ground upon which it rests, and to discover how it tells upon society as well as upon the life of the individual, are the objects we have in view.

These objects may perhaps be best accomplished if we consider (1) socialism as an economic theory which has only secured adequate attention within recent years; (2) the first attempts that were made to describe socialistic ideals and methods, and the reception which these had at the hands of individualists; (3) the ethical end which socialists profess to have in view; (4) the claim which they make for

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

right economic conditions and just laws, and the encouragements which they have in insisting upon this claim; (5) the proposals that they make as to associated labour and collective capital, and the methods by means of which they hope to gain possession of land and capital; (6) the misconceptions which have been entertained as to what they propose, and the fundamental economic problem which they must solve before their schemes can be regarded as workable; (7) whether better work can be done under the influence of socialistic rule than under that of individualism; and (8) the debt we owe to socialists, together with the principle which best unifies individualistic and socialistic differences, and secures the retention of all that is good and true in both theories.

I

As a positive element in the science of human life, socialism is quite modern. Its rise may be traced back to the beginning of the present century. "It was," says Mr. Kirkup, "in 1817 that Robert Owen published his plans of social reconstruction. The theories of Saint Simon began definitely to take a socialistic direction about the same time. The newest phase of the revolutionary spirit had its rise just two years after the French Revolution had apparently received its quietus at Waterloo, and since then it has grown both in intensity and volume."¹

¹ *Inquiry into Socialism*, p. 2.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

To speak, however, of socialism as of this date is true only with an important explanation. It has arisen thus late as an active element in social life, and has been applied to society on a wide scale within recent years, but it is found in operation among primitive races from the earliest periods of history. The tribal and clan systems were essentially socialistic; these represent original forms of society, and socialism found in them congenial soil for its growth. Among the Hebrews it prevailed. The Mosaic legislation made the amplest provision for its operation. There is, indeed, nothing more worthy of a careful study than the provision made for "the release of debts," the restoration of lands that had been sold, to their original holders, and the freeing of slaves at definite periods, such as the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee. At the end of every seven years there was a release of debts. As the land had rest for a year, so the debtor was relieved from the payment of interest for that year. Lands were restored at the Jubilee, and at the same time the law proclaimed the manumission of the slave.¹ This deserves attention at the hands of all those who profess to believe that in the Sacred Writings the Divine will is made known. To them, at least, the Mosaic legislation cannot be without a meaning or without a lesson. At the present time, and under present laws, framed, it is presumed, by Christian men, landholders often put on double charges at fixed periods instead of remitting them; and Christian creditors exact the last farthing

¹ Exod. xxiii. 9-12; Lev. xvi. 29-34, xxv. 1-7; Num. xxix. 1-12; Deut. xv. 1-3.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

from the debtor. It may be urged that the Mosaic legislation belonged to a very primitive state of society. That is true enough, but happening under a theocracy which Christians believe to have been a real rule, the intimation of the path of duty cannot be easily mistaken. Since that at which we aim is to get light from all quarters as to what are the best social conditions, much might be said upon this inviting Mosaic legislation. The inducement to say much is very strong; but we content ourselves with the pertinent observation that socialists are obviously justified in pointing to this primitive society, formed under special Divine direction, as they also are in calling attention to the brotherhood which the New Testament inculcates, whenever they seek for support for their economic theory. "If it were also remembered," says Mrs. Fawcett, a quite safe and orthodox exponent of political economy, "that the apostles were the founders of communism, it may be seriously supposed that the denunciation of communistic doctrines would be less passionate and declamatory."¹

Elsewhere we find evidence of socialistic ideals being entertained. Thus, Plato's *Republic* was an attempt to describe a theoretic State governed by the wisest, and in which the fear of being ruled by the worst was to be the strongest motive to service. Dante's *De Monarchia*, Ken's *Edmund*, More's *Utopia*, Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Fénelon's *Télémaque*, Morris' *News from Nowhere*, and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*,

¹ *Political Economy for Beginners*, p. 40.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

are socialistic descriptions of society. With the exception of Morris and Bellamy, all these writers were obliged to embody their socialistic ideals in allegorical form. That such conceptions as their works contain, should have held and fascinated the minds of some of the best thinkers of their respective ages, is proof that many must have been dissatisfied with the economic system under which they were forced to live, and is also a prediction of the realization of better conditions under which privileges shall be more fully enjoyed and duties more readily discharged. It is a somewhat difficult task to attempt to determine the influence which those exerted who couched their socialistic ideals in allegories. They must, however, in some degree, have prepared the way for the socialism of to-day; but whatever may have been the effect of their writings, it is now manifest enough that the social state of which they wrote, has become a definite object for realization. Socialism is now an active element in politics and religion. As one of the greatest moral forces in modern life it demands now, and is receiving as it never did at any previous period, the serious attention which it deserves.

II

When at the beginning of the present century socialistic proposals were made, they were essentially protests against the operations of the hard and fast individualism which prevailed alike in Church and State. The sufferings of the poor called the claims

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

of socialism into prominence. Fortunately in some countries the conditions were present which made it possible for socialists to formulate their claims: while in others, though socialists were subjected to imprisonment for venturing to advocate socialistic schemes, yet they persevered until they won the right to state and define their socialistic theories. As might have been anticipated, the first attempts to describe socialistic ideals and the methods by means of which they could be reached were marked by great extravagances. The ends aimed at were imperfectly apprehended; the methods proposed were revolutionary in the extreme. Hence it happened that the reception accorded to socialism was anything but cordial; on the contrary, emphasis was laid on the extravagant elements, and all who ventured to defend socialistic proposals were treated as beside themselves. If socialism assumed a concrete form in the minds of those who opposed its claims, it was associated either with the theories of Saint Simon or the agitation of Robert Owen, or, in later times, with the names of Fourier and Louis Blanc, or with the scenes connected with the French Revolution of 1848, or with the name of Bakunin, "the Apostle of Anarchism." Socialism was generally named only to be condemned. The economic laws and ethical movement of which it was the expression were little understood. The conflict, certain to arise, between the developments of the industrial revolution and the claims of labour was not expected. Men who were forward to oppose the socialistic proposals that were made did not pause and reflect upon the ethical

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

force which gave vitality to the new movement. It is always easy to join in a chorus of condemnation. Perhaps we who have seen socialism accepted by statesmen and translated into legislative Acts are also apt to blame its earlier exponents. We see clearly the defects of their schemes. We know, too, that the accidental and not the essential in socialistic principles has been italicised by opponents; but if, on the one hand, we cannot pretend to sit in judgment upon those who had not insight enough to discriminate between what is real and what is accidental in socialism, neither, on the other, have we a right to condemn the pioneers of the movement, even though they committed mistakes which the harsh economic and political conditions under which they lived, rather than anything on their part, made almost inevitable.

Socialism has been stripped of many of its extravagances. It has received a scientific treatment; but there are still those who refuse to look at it under any other form than that which extreme claims give to it. They do not believe that it contains any elements of truth, and, therefore, they reject everything which bears the stamp of socialism. The number of these is gradually decreasing, though their influence is still considerable. There are, however, many, and the number of such is constantly increasing, who give to socialism an impartial study, and reach the conclusion that it embodies economic principles, without which society can neither be strong nor enduring. The extraordinary number of books that have been written within recent years

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

on social progress¹ bears witness to the hold which socialism has upon the minds of the best thinkers of the age. The socialistic Acts of Parliament which aim at the well-being of society afford further evidence of the fruit of socialistic teaching. We have already cited the testimony of the Master of Balliol, who sees in socialism much that is good. To Professor Caird's testimony we add that of the Bishop of Rochester, who, a few years ago, addressing the Guild of St. Matthew—a body of Ritualistic Socialists—said “that by the time that the young men present are grey-headed, all that is true, and honest, and pure, and reasonable in socialism may have become incorporated in the moral inheritance of the people.” This frank acknowledgment indicates the attitude which many adopt towards socialistic measures, and also makes it quite plain that the reception now given to socialism is altogether different from that which was at first accorded to it. The change of attitude is mainly due to the principles which socialism embodies, being better understood; but it also owes something to the persistence with which, through good and evil report, socialists have advocated their claims. The influence of many clergymen also has been a factor in making for the different attitude now adopted. They are not, it must be admitted, often found in the van of

¹ One of the remarkable books recently published is that by Dr. James Denis, who writes on *Christian Missions and Social Progress*, and treats the subject of missions in a new but most legitimate way, viz., from the standpoint of their influence on social relationships.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

progress. They often, indeed, reluctantly follow where they ought to lead; but in this instance many of them have set a good example in breaking away from traditional economic theories. The explanation of their action may perhaps be found in the circumstance that the ethics of Christianity and that of socialism, rightly understood, are identical; for both are based on brotherhood.

III

Socialists claim to have a definite ethical end in view. That at which they aim is the realization of justice in all departments of social life. To most of them justice is infinitely more than custom moulded by cultured reflection into rules of conduct, as Mr. Huxley teaches,¹ or mere "conformity to the conditions of social progress," as Mr. Leslie Stephen alleges.² In their judgment it is one of the essential principles of moral government. Whenever justice is held to be less than this, the ethical force which supports their claims is at once dissipated. Your opponents of socialism may regard society as governed chiefly by utilitarian considerations or by customs transformed into rules of conduct; but neither of these can satisfy the true socialist; for to him, justice, while independent of the will of man, is yet that sovereign principle by which his actions are tested and tried. His appeals rest upon justice. Explain it away, and all his fair ideals vanish. To the hedonist, society is only a matter of conveniences.

¹ *Vide* p. 57.

² *Vide* p. 59.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

He does not hold by the eternal principle of right. There is nothing in his ethics which imperatively demands obedience, nothing at least higher than what makes for agreeable feelings or for the health and preservation of society; and it is, therefore, comparatively easy for him to set aside the claims of socialism. This, however, is not, and cannot be, the position of the socialist; for both his ideals and the methods for realizing them demand belief in the moral law and in the claims of justice.

An act of unfairness is done to socialists whenever, and as often as, it is assumed that they care only for material things, or when it is said that they look for the realization of the Kingdom of Heaven by merely recognising the measures and methods of the production and distribution of wealth. Some of them, it is admitted, have given countenance to this inadequate conception of their aim, by insisting upon economic questions to the exclusion of ethical requirements; but the great majority perceive clearly enough that economics deserves attention because it makes for moral improvement; that the well-being of man is the ultimate object after which social workers ought to strive; and that if stress is laid upon material things, it is only because right *conditions* are necessary to the development of *character*. Aiming, therefore, at "the greatest amount and quality of life and character," they maintain that man is a social being, and that the condition of *bellum omnium contra omnes* cannot continue for ever. A better state than the present, they hold, must be realizable; but in making efforts to reach it they have also been

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

taught through a hard experience to perceive that the laws of social growth must be observed, and that the reorganization of society must be accomplished slowly.

They have, however, much to encourage them in prosecuting their ethical end. The methods of our present individual economy, the anonymousness of modern life, the tendency of society to gather round two opposite poles—labour and capital, and the vast amount of social discontent and poverty, supply them with powerful motives to action.¹ They know, too, that the progress which has marked all departments of human endeavour must also become in ever-increasing measure characteristic of social movements. Natural science, commerce, and art have all made vast strides; and they, therefore, argue that the social side of life must also feel and respond to the beats and throbs of the new life, everywhere manifesting itself. Progress is common to all sides of life, and no part can remain untouched. The signs of its influence upon social life are quite obvious. Politics is being inspired by higher ethical principles. Ideas of the solidarity of the race are gaining ground; and now more fully than ever it is being acknowledged, that religion itself must be tested by the civilizing and uplifting moral power which it professes to exert upon society. But no informed socialist can be misled by these signs of progress. They exist and mean much; they stimulate to effort and inspire workers with hope. It needs, however, to be recognised that all social

¹ *Vide* Dr. Newman Smyth's *Christian Ethics*, pp. 443-6.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

work must be carried on under certain disadvantages ; for, people may look upon progress in science, commerce, art, and even theology, and have no other feelings than those that are compatible with mutual congratulations, but it is otherwise when social questions are discussed, and drastic proposals are made for the reorganization of society ; these threaten the existing order of things and disturb society ; and it is not too much to say, that society is to many a fetich almost as sacred as the car of Juggernaut to the Hindu worshipper.

IV

Socialists make a claim for right economic conditions and just laws. They draw up a severe indictment against the operations of the present economic system. Labourers, they maintain, do not receive adequate remuneration for their toil. The severe individualism that obtains accounts for the unbrotherly competition which prevails. There are many who, living in idleness, render no service to the State. Many also live in luxury. They have amassed great riches, not because they possess superior talents, or give more time than others to labour, but because the present social system has presented occasions which has enabled them to take advantage of their fellows. This may seem a too severe indictment, but even in its severest parts it is supported by a writer like Stuart Mill, who says, "If persons are helped in their worldly career by their virtues, so are they, and quite as often, by

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

their vices—by servility and sycophancy, by hard-hearted and close-fisted selfishness, by permitted lies and tricks of trade, by gambling speculations, not seldom by downright knavery.”¹ The economic laws under which these things are possible cannot, socialists not without good show of reason urge, be based on righteousness; and the mere fact that they have been long in operation, and that under them a large measure of prosperity has been enjoyed, cannot be a sufficient justification for their continuance.

Socialists are not deterred from arguing for drastic economic reforms by the circumstance that, radical changes might imply a social revolution. They claim the right to investigate the root-principles of society. If these principles, on investigation, are found to be indefensible, if under their operations great masses of the people suffer, then they argue that other principles ought to be adopted. Reading carefully the history of society, they see on many of its pages evidences of great changes having been effected by agencies which might be described as revolutionary; but all revolutions are not to be condemned off-hand. Some are, indeed, bad because they have been prompted by bad motives, and accomplished by harsh agencies. Some are good because they made for social improvement. Illustrations of the former are seen in the arbitrary usurpation of land by feudal lords, who seized the soil which the clans at one time held as common property, the chieftainship being elective and not hereditary; and in the misdeeds of Henry VIII. and

¹ *Fortnightly Review*, February 1879.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

his courtiers, who confiscated the vast possessions of the ancient guilds without ever for a moment entertaining the idea of compensation. Illustrations of the latter are seen in the changes that took place when slavery gave place to serfdom, and that, again, to wage-earning. Justice demanding, and the dire poverty of thousands requiring a fundamental alteration of the present economic system, a social revolution may be effected with the best results. The ideas of civil war and bloodshed, so often associated with revolutions, do not necessarily belong to them. *They are accompanied with the slaughter of men and women only where power is in the hands of oppressors.* They may be accomplished by peaceful agencies; and where, indeed, they are so effected the most salutary results follow.

Socialists, in urging their claim for right economic conditions, can legitimately point to the benefits which have already been secured by voluntary efforts which are socialistic in character, and by socialistic legislation. The Co-operative Movement and Profit-Sharing, though only partial applications of socialistic principles, are, so far as they go, illustrations of what may be accomplished by voluntary socialistic efforts. Education, Factory, Allotments, Sunday Closing, Crofter and Workmen Compensation Acts, as also the State taking over and working the Post Office, Telegraphs, and in some countries Railways, afford illustrations of what may be done by socialistic legislation. All these acts and measures trench upon individualism; but the benefits realized under them have already been so great that few of those who

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

were at one time most antagonistic to them venture now to oppose them.

In pressing their demands socialists have much to encourage them. They see their principles gradually gaining acceptance. Their strongest opponents are also unconsciously demonstrating the practicability of their schemes. Thus, socialism explains many programmes, authorized and the reverse, which now receive the attention of politicians. Witness, for instance, the Graduated Income Tax, the Eight Hours Day, the appropriation of Free Duties by the municipality, and the claim that landlords should be obliged to improve the dwellings of the poor. The practical demonstration of socialistic schemes is seen in the operations of Joint Stock Companies, and in those of the enormous syndicates, notably in America, which carry on works by means of collective capital. Socialists likewise see their proposals advocated by representative churchmen. The Dean of Wells is one of many who, after a careful study of the essential elements in socialism, have reached the conclusion that the time is not far distant when strikes will be more numerous, better organized, and therefore more successful, than they have been in the past; when Trades Unions will include women workers; when the nationalization of land will be accomplished by the payment of a sum of money equal to "the estimated value of the interest of the present possessor and the heir."¹ But as affording socialists almost as much encouragement as any of these things, the

¹ *Vide* "Christianity and Socialism," by the Dean of Wells, *Contemporary Review*, November 1889.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

light which has been thrown upon the subject of *property* has been hailed by them; and now they argue that since the term does not have a constant and invariable meaning, there can be no insuperable objection to the existing idea of property being changed, and a substitute formed for it more in keeping with social growth and improvement. "The idea of property," observes Stuart Mill, "is not some one thing, identical throughout history and incapable of alteration, but is variable, like all other creations of the human mind; at any given time it is a brief expression denoting the right over things conferred by the law or custom of some given society at that time; but neither on this point nor on any other has the law or custom of a given time and place a claim to be stereotyped for ever."¹ There was a time when private property in land was unknown, as when the clan system obtained; but there came a period when private property extensively prevailed. It included even men and women as slaves. There may come, socialists argue, a time when law and custom, as the expressions of righteousness, shall revert to the original idea of property as that which is held in common and for the common good.

V

With all these encouragements present to their minds, socialists make their definite proposals. They do not contemplate small measures only. The evils of the present economic system are great and wide-

¹ *Fortnightly Review*, April 1889.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

spread. The reform must, therefore, in their judgment, be equal to the social malady. Accordingly they propose that, in the production, exchange, and distribution of commodities, associated labour with collective capital should do the work that is now done by private capital, and wage-labour. This fundamental proposal raises the practical question to which socialists are obliged to attempt an answer, namely, by what method or methods are land and capital, two chief agencies of production, to be transferred from the hands of landowners, capitalists or syndicates of capitalists, to those of associated labourers? All attempts to give a satisfactory answer to this question bear witness to the difficulty that confronts socialists. The evils of the present social system are obvious enough. The penury and sufferings to which hundreds of thousands are doomed under it are also quite plain. It is likewise on all sides recognised that labour, in any given industry, is one of the most important, though not the only factor, in the production of commodities. All these things are fully acknowledged; but the question still remains, How are you to bring within the control of associated labourers, land and capital? How are you, if you have regard to the claims of justice, to get the means of production into their hands?

It is the tritest of truisms to say that, whatever measures or methods are adopted, they must be applied gradually. The present economic system is not the product of a day's growth. It has grown by slow degrees; and in any endeavours which may be made to change the present order of things a long time

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

must elapse before a new and better system can be established. Many schemes and methods have been propounded. Their respective advocates have urged them with great persistence. The Fabian Society, a representative body of socialists, aims at "the emancipation of land and industrial capital from individual and class ownership, and the investing of them in the community for the general benefit"; and for the attainment of these ends, its method is "the spread of socialist opinions," and "the dissemination of knowledge as to the relation between the individual and society in its economic, ethical, and political aspects." The Fabian Society relies, therefore, mainly upon education. The process must be slow, but its members hold that it will be thorough. It lays great stress upon getting hold of the youths of our Universities at that formative period of their lives when they are most susceptible to impressions, and most eager to embrace new solutions of old difficulties. It does not, however, offer any distinctive proposal for the transference of land and capital from the hands of the present owners to those of associated labourers. Its function is educative, and it relies upon economics for social reforms.

The Social Democratic Federation aims at the same socialistic ideal. As its name implies, it is a body of collectivists who appeal to the democracy. Its programme is, perhaps, one of the largest and most pronounced that has ever been framed. The members of the Federation do not neglect the study of economics, but they are not so much occupied with the discussion of subtle economic problems as with

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

the task of showing the evils of individual ownership of land and capital. Much of their work is negative and destructive. The present social system is the object of their attack, and they endeavour to show its defects. They attempt this, however, in order that a better system may take its place. So far as their work is positive, their efforts are differentiated from those of the Fabian Society in this, that they rely mainly upon politics. They emphasize the duties which the State ought to discharge; they look to Parliament for reforms; and if their programme were carried out, they would entrust a strong central government with almost absolute power.

It is, indeed, with respect to this latter point that the Socialistic League came into existence. Founded by William Morris, poet and socialist, the League, while having much in common with the Federation, broke away from it because a centralized power would, in the judgment of the members of the League, inevitably issue in oppression. The Socialistic League, therefore, laid greatest stress upon "free communal groups," and they approximated the Fabians in holding that the special province of social reformers in the present state of society is to impart information as to socialistic ideas, and so prepare the minds of the people for drastic changes, which, they hold, will come when the conditions are provided for them.¹

The "Christian Socialist Society," the "Christian Social Union," the "Guild of St. Matthew," and other Christian societies, aim at social reforms. They do not go so far, perhaps, as the Social Democratic

¹ The League has become defunct.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

Federation, but they are in sincere sympathy with socialistic ideas. Economics and politics have for many of their members an absorbing interest; but that which characterizes the great majority of them is not their knowledge of economics or passion for politics, but the profound conviction that Christianity, rightly interpreted, contains the solution of the social evils of the day. They see that the brotherliness which Christianity inculcates, strikes a fatal blow at the individualism which has so long reigned in commerce, politics, and religion; and they, therefore, insist that with "the main contentions of the socialists the Christian is not only able, but bound, to agree;" and, further, that "with the moral questions herein involved the theologian is bound to concern himself."¹ The higher ecclesiastics of the Church, while not without sympathy for the suffering poor, and not unwilling to aid all efforts for redress which are, in their opinion, legitimate, yet generally meet appeals that are made to them very much as the leaders of political parties meet proposals for further reforms. They offer a gentle resistance; but ecclesiastical, cannot any more than political, leaders continue to resist deep and sincere convictions on the part of the people; and already the powerful declaration which an ecclesiastic like Bishop Westcott has made² on behalf of socialism, is evidence that the Church is awakening to a sense of her duty in relation to the social questions of the day.

¹ Vide *Memorial* presented to the Pan-Anglican Conference of Bishops in 1888 by the Guild of St. Matthew.

² Vide *Christian Aspects of Life*, pp. 221-41.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Social ideals were long seen before the method or methods for their realization were outlined. Many reformers had, also, to propound and discuss many conceivable methods before a workable method was found. This explains how it happened that many proposals were made, but made only to be rejected. Some of these proposals embodied schemes that were extravagant in the extreme, but still those who had caught a vision of the social idea laboured assiduously. They could not believe that a workable method was beyond discovery. Hope inspired them; and now, after many years of labour, one scheme at least applicable to the land has been propounded which almost all socialists accept, and many politicians are already advocating as a practical measure. It is the taxation of ground rents and values. Socialists see in this proposal a means for nationalization of the land, and an important step towards "the public organization of labour for all public purposes." Politicians, and some distinguished statesmen have already accepted the principle of special rating of city land values; they have not, it is true, committed themselves definitely to a statement as to the amount of taxation to be imposed, but that is a minor question. The principle is the main element, and when once it is conceded, the people whose welfare is at stake will insist upon it being applied on a wide scale.

Of all the proposals made, that of taxation is the most feasible. In working it out, we admit, many hardships must be endured; but more or less suffering attends all changes; and in this instance the question to be decided is, whether the sufferings of the millions

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

are to go on perpetually, or those of the few for a time.

But assuming that gradually increased taxation of land would ultimately place all that land yields in the hands of the people, there remains the further and still more difficult question, How are associated labourers to gain possession of capital? This question has also been seriously considered by socialists. Indeed they have been obliged to give the most earnest attention to it. Without attempting a statement of all the methods that have been advocated, there are three schemes which ought to be noticed, and that because they have been propounded and urged with great fervour.

(a) It has been proposed by socialists of the extremest school, that the State should at once take over all the means of production and exchange. Thorough-going State socialists maintain that this is the most effective, and indeed the only remedy for the social evils of the day. A person has an easy task on hand when he sets himself to point out the obvious objections that can be urged against this scheme. It needs, however, to be remembered that it was a proposal made by men driven to despair by the evils of the present social system. They had historical precedents which they could cite, acts of confiscation without remuneration, and trade monopolies granted without any return save political votes; and with these before them, they argued that the State would only be acting justly if, by a legislative Act, all means of production and distribution were taken over and employed on behalf of the

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

people. Whatever may be said on abstract grounds for this drastic proposal, it is manifest enough that the objections to its adoption are simply insuperable. It is more than a counsel of perfection; it is one of despair; and almost all socialists have recognised its absolute impracticability.

(b) Many State socialists propose that the State should gradually take over the means of production and distribution. They accordingly support every legislative Act which has for its object to put more power into the hands of the people. They do not assume that great social changes will take place speedily; for they clearly perceive that the working classes will not make demands upon their Parliamentary representatives until the present economic system has developed its utmost logical issues. One of these issues is, that small traders must go down before millionaires and the large syndicates, which are every day increasing; but capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of nature, its own negation;¹ and socialists of the State school, therefore, maintain that when once the people see the logical development of the competitive system they will make larger political demands; and that private capitalism must give place to the collective ownership of all the means of production by all the members of society.

(c) A third class of socialists endeavour to attain their ideal on quite different lines. They have the same end in view, but they hope to reach it by another method. According to them, voluntary com-

¹ *Das Kapital*, by Karl Marx, vol. i. p. 78.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

binations must prepare the way for a right socialistic state. In their judgment, it would take too long a time to work out an effective remedy for the clamant needs of the suffering poor, if Parliament were to be depended upon alone, or, at the best, if Parliament were only to be spurred to action after the full development of the competitive system had taken place and was seen. Those socialists, therefore, who rely upon voluntary combinations, while not failing to see that Parliament must grant all that the people claim, hold that associated bodies can do much to bring all the means of production and distribution into the hands of the people. It is not by any means contended, that all who join voluntary societies have a clear idea of the end towards which the associated body is working ; for many who become members of these societies do not see much beyond the immediate profits that are reaped. Principles, however, operate, whether observed or not ; and the scientific socialist who has pinned his faith to the voluntary association, is not without hope that this method of realizing a better social state may prove one of the most effective agencies. He perceives that the tendency of the times is towards syndicates and companies, in which the comparatively rich alone can share ; and he, therefore, looks to such voluntary associations of working men as will enable them to reap the benefits of combination, and at the same time prepare the way for the means of production and distribution being in the hands of the people.

The State, it is held, may aid these associations,

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

since there is nothing in their constitution to exclude State assistance. Lassalle advocated the use of State aid, which, he argued, ought to be given to associations for production. Karl Marx opposed the proposal, but in this instance the majority of socialists have followed Lassalle rather than Marx ; for, recognising that the forces arrayed against them are very powerful, and further, that there is nothing in their schemes which forbids, but rather much that demands, State assistance, they have maintained that every facility and advantage ought to be given to them. Voluntary associations, they argue, are composed of the great mass of the working people, and, therefore, have a distinct claim upon the State. The State is the people, and Governments hold office to do whatever is for the people's good. Political doctrine even goes further ; for it supports the maxim that the will of the people must prevail. Whatever they demand must be enacted ; and as they naturally desire better conditions, under which they may live with greater comfort, it is not difficult to perceive that only that Government will be retained in power which legislates in the interests of the millions of bread-winners.

Those socialists who aim at the reorganization of society by means of voluntary associations regard, however, the associations as merely temporary agencies. They are obliged for the present to employ the competitive system, but so far as the competitive element enters into their dealings, the associations cannot be final institutions. They have meantime many things to recommend them. They carry cer-

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

tain advantages. They habituate the members to the idea of property held in common; and socialists contend that when the idea is deeply rooted in the minds of the people, the way will be prepared for the introduction of socialism in a thoroughgoing form, and on a large scale. The transition from a state where individualism holds sway to that where socialism reigns will, they further argue, be easily accomplished; for voluntary associations are closely allied to collectivism, and as such will pass more easily into socialism than private businesses.

To do justice to these socialistic methods discrimination, sympathy, and a large outlook are necessary; but even where these qualities exist, and exist in great measure, it is far from easy to conclude that socialistic ideals can be realized by means of any of the methods that have been propounded; for, whenever an attempt is made to discover how the most feasible of them would work out in actual life, it is at once seen that any scheme which entirely excludes individualistic efforts presents difficulties which cannot be easily overcome; and further, that there are fundamental economic questions which await solution, and must be answered before the best of these methods can become a workable measure. We say this, both with the knowledge that socialism is often misunderstood, and with the conviction that under the reign of brotherliness, which lies at the root of socialism and gives it moral force, better work could be done than is possible under any individualistic system.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

VI

Misconceptions have been entertained as to what socialism is and aims at. In the effort to remove these erroneous ideas, socialists have, at the same time, been obliged to answer many questions, and especially to deal with economic problems for the solution of which they have scarcely yet taken the first step. Had the course of socialism been straight and smooth, false ideas as to its aims would not have been entertained; but its path has been uneven and rugged; and, therefore, in making for their ideals socialists have been much misunderstood. The task they have on hand is, indeed, stupendous, and its accomplishment implies a revolution in economics. From economists of the older school socialists have therefore, met with the most strenuous opposition. The former have been quite sincere in their opposition, and it scarcely needs to be said that, wedded to economic theories which have long enjoyed the sanction of the masters, they could scarcely avoid putting an inaccurate interpretation on a new movement which meant, among other things, the recasting of economics.

But whether this be the right explanation of the misunderstandings that have arisen or not, it is quite certain that there are several misconceptions, out of which have sprung strong popular prejudices, that ought to be dismissed from the minds of all inquirers. Thus, socialists do not aim at taking from others, levelling down, and making all men equal,¹ or at

¹ Vide *The Christian Ethic*, by Professor William Knight, p. 91.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

having all things in common. What they contend for is, that all the means of production and distribution should be in the hands of a common body, and be used solely for the common good. This is very different from the false interpretation which is put upon their programme, according to which all persons would be reduced to the same level. The socialistic proposal is quite definite, and, as Schäffle remarks, "it is all the more necessary to lay special stress upon this, as public opinion in the present day is inclined to ascribe to the collective principle a communistic and levelling tendency in the domain of the expenditure of income and of domestic economy, to a far greater extent than socialism warrants, or than its writings express; while people seem as yet hardly able to grasp the gigantic revolution in the province of production and barter, and as a natural result considerably to undervalue it. Especially on this point it is to be regretted, and can produce no good, that people will not bring themselves quietly and considerably to form a clear conception of the real bearing of the collective principle, and to distinguish clearly between the essential quality and the accessories of socialism."¹

Again, socialists do not hold, as is so often assumed and asserted, that under socialistic rule there could be no private possessions. On the contrary, they maintain that every person ought to be permitted to use his earnings as he pleases. The only restrictions which they impose are that all things known to be physically or morally injurious should be forbidden,

¹ *The Quintessence of Socialism*, p. 102.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

and that all production must be effected by collective capital. With these reservations, room is left for the exercise of benevolence, saving, support of religious institutions, and all that ministers to life.¹

Further, among enlightened and philosophic socialists there is no proposal to have any thing like an equal division. Remuneration would be according to the service rendered, and would vary with the work done. Here, however, socialists are under the necessity of finding the solution of a grave economic question. They have, indeed, no harder or more difficult problem to solve than that of estimating and rightly remunerating service; and though this question really lies at the basis of socialism,² it is just in relation to it that the utmost uncertainty prevails. Karl Marx clearly perceived that the fabric of socialism could not be reared unless this question were satisfactorily answered. Accordingly he set himself to solve it. He took over Ricardo's economic theories, in which labour held a preponderating place. Marx and his followers have, therefore, laid the greatest stress upon labour and its claims. The opponents of socialism have, rightly enough, pointed out that labour is too variable, being of many kinds, mental and manual, to be easily estimated; but this objection has not deterred the great majority of socialists, both in this country and on the Continent,

¹ *Vide* an interesting discussion of these questions by Schäffle, *ibid.* pp. 100-119.

² "Karl Marx expressly declares that his treatment of labour as the substance and standard of value is the corner-stone of his whole system."—Schäffle, *ibid.* p. 81.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

from following Marx. They insist upon a one-sided view of labour. "Socialism starts," says Professor Haushofer, in his *Grundzüge der Politischen Ökonomie*,¹ "from the idea that all men possess an equal right to happiness, and to the enjoyment of wealth, and that every privileged enjoyment of happiness of single individuals is a crime against the rights of the masses. It opposes the evils of Liberal Political Economy, self-interest, and free competition, and the power of capital. According to the ideas of socialism it is not talent, industry, saving possessions, or capital and credit which are the foundations of well-being and of order, but labour alone." To lay emphasis upon labour, as socialists have done, is legitimate enough. In many instances the toiler is inadequately remunerated; in others, men reap gains or rewards out of all proportion to the services they render, or to the talents they have and use, or the time they spend in rendering service. The indictment of Professor Herron is, indeed, readily enough endorsed when he says that the suffering of the poor "is the direct result of the centralization of wealth, of the investment of the control of industry in the hands of the cunning and strong, who indirectly rule the lives, and the economics of the people with no responsibility for their welfare, with entire unaccountability to their will." ²

Recognising that suffering thus exists and springs from these causes, socialists endeavour to find a scientific basis for the assaults which they make upon the present social system. Attaching the very utmost

¹ p. 144.

² Vide *The Christian Society*, p. 16.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

importance to labour, some lay stress upon labour being paid "according to the needs" of the labourer; while others insist that it should be "according to the service rendered." The former is the position of the older socialists, who, on this question, follow Louis Blanc; the latter that of the younger, who have developed Fourier's teachings. But these manifestly leave the economic problem untouched; for, they do not explain how either needs or services are to be ascertained and estimated. Marx attempted an explanation by saying that the value of all things must be found in their "labour-cost" or "socially necessary labour-time," and that commodities which contain "an equal quantity of labour, or which can be produced in the same time," have an equal exchange value. With certain important emendations, such as that to labour-cost must be added the ever varying use-value, socialists have accepted the Ricardo-Marxian theory, and have rested their claims upon it. But a standard for the division of the products of labour will be sought for in vain until a standard of value with the least possible variation has been found. Labour, being of so many different kinds, is far too variable. This objection has been urged by writers like Mr. W. H. Mallock with irresistible force.¹ The most imperative task, therefore, which lies before socialists is that of finding a standard in terms of which labour itself can be estimated. Some socialists, such as Herr Schramm, have frankly abandoned Marx's theory, and do not seek for a standard of division in it. But, strange to say,

¹ Vide *Labour and Popular Welfare*.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

it is not socialists who have discovered a fairer standard of value. That has been done by economists; for the clearest sighted economists have perceived that the standard must be sought for neither in labour, nor gold, nor in any single article, but in the average price, over a given number of years, of a large number of articles of consumption and use.

We have already pointed out that the elaborate tables prepared by Soetbeer, Sauerbeck, the *Economist*, and the American Aldrich Report supply the information that is needed in order to ascertain the average price of such articles. This new standard of value being found, labour would not be estimated by the time spent upon it, or rewarded according to the actual labour expended, but according to what it might produce; for as Hill Burton long ago pointed out, "real labour is not measurable by time, but by what it produces."¹ The adoption of such a standard would effect many changes, but perhaps, most notable of all, it would imply the setting aside of the gold standard which now obtains so generally, and would lead to economic conditions under which gold, like all other articles of use or consumption, would be sought for its utility alone. Gold would thus find its natural place, and the incentive to sacrifice thousands of valuable human lives, and to devastate fair lands in the search for it, would to a large extent be taken away. It is somewhat surprising that socialists have not given to this standard of value the attention which it deserves.

¹ *Political and Social Economy*, p. 30.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

They have been so much occupied with labour and labour-time standards of value that they have failed to see that there lies to their hand a natural standard of which they might make excellent use ; for they do not aim at an equal division, but at a fair distribution of the products of labour, and nothing would so greatly aid them as the adoption of a standard into which entered as main factors, these products.

VII

But we have to inquire whether better work could not be done under the influence of the principles which socialistic rule implies than is possible under any individualistic system. The right discussion of the question obliges one to put away all sentiment, and to examine its issues with impartiality. The question resolves itself, on the one hand, into motives to labour, and, on the other, into what is the end of human life.

1. Under the present system the most powerful motives to labour are, self-interest, satisfaction from the accumulation of wealth, the ambition of many rich men "to found a family," and that insatiable eagerness "to get money" which is as the horse-leech's daughters that ever cry, "Give, give."¹ We have already seen² that over against these motives socialists place those of honour, approbation, brotherliness, and duty. The mere statement of these two sets of motives is sufficient to show their relative merits, and also which is the better ; for, whatever may be the theory held as to the origin and develop-

¹ Prov. xxx. 15.

² pp. 241-42.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

ment of moral sentiments, the intellectual judgment and the moral sense decide for honour, and approbation, brotherliness and duty. The decisive conclusion thus reached ought, therefore, to go a long way in determining the question at issue.

It needs, however, to be acknowledged, as we have tried to do, that individualism accounts for much of the prosperity that has attended human efforts; but this acknowledgment does not necessarily imply either that the prosperity is the highest that might have been attained, or that other motives might not produce still better results. Higher motives and greater prosperity are certainly possibilities; and if so, the last word has not yet been spoken respecting the real foundations of society. It may be urged that before the higher motives can become regnant a long process of moral education is necessary. All informed persons must, indeed, grant so much; but the mere acknowledgment of the need for moral training is not enough. Positive efforts must be made; endeavours to realize better economic and social conditions must be attempted; and, therefore, when socialists condemn the grasping greed of the competitive system, and lament the misery, injustice, and temptations to fraud which that system encourages, it is not, at least, the province of earnest and sincere men to do ought that might buttress an essentially selfish system, and damp the energies of social workers who labour for a better condition of things, under which the material will minister to and not oppose the moral and spiritual.

2. The brotherly sentiments which socialists

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

cherish, under the influence of which better work may be done, and the ideal at which they aim, can be seen to still greater advantage if the *end* of human life is considered. No man attains to the realization of self by selfish conduct. To gather everything to one's own stores is not the way to satisfaction. The accumulation of wealth brings its own Nemesis. Men who have amassed great riches pay, as Dr. Henry Dyer rightly observes, "dearly for it by giving up all that really constitutes life, and their money passes to their children or relatives, who may often squander it in an idle life and demoralize the society in which they live."¹ Whoever may, Christians cannot consistently advocate self-pleasing. The outstanding features of individualism, against which socialists strongly protest, find no recognition in the teachings of Christ. He proclaims the law of life; but search is made in vain for anything in all His sayings which might be construed to mean that He encouraged self-seeking, or disregard of the welfare and well-being of others. On the contrary, His teachings lay emphasis upon brotherliness as the state in which the highest services can be rendered and the best work done. He inculcated kindliness; and if to those who profess His name His words appeal with any meaning, it is that the principles of conduct which He enunciated and enforced ought to be applied to business, politics, and all social relationships.

It is true that Christ did not lay down hard and fast rules of conduct. He cannot, indeed, be claimed

¹ *The Foundations of Social Politics*, p. 10.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

as belonging to any special school; but it holds equally good that His teachings assume the fundamental equality of men, and commend those qualities which are associated with honour, brotherliness, and duty. These are the things which, entering into life, give it worth, and render the hardest work comparatively light. The motives that inspire to duty lessen the burden of the task undertaken. Man, too, realizes his highest good in working for others; his life spent in their service attains its greatest perfection. The disinterested conduct, so necessary for the realization of socialistic ideals, is, therefore, one of the first demands made upon all who aim at living the highest life. The end unto which man has been created is, indeed, only reached through service, and the fields of service lie in the lives of our fellow-men. Man does not live for himself alone; and if he makes the attempt, his moral nature becomes dwarfed, his mental powers enfeebled, and he realizes the pitiable lot of the unhappy miser. The life of each man is threaded into the lives of his neighbours. Subtle and sacred ties bind man to man; and when the last word is spoken, it is that apparently enigmatical but profoundly true saying: "Whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." Obedience to this law makes for the best work, and is the guarantee of the highest social life.

It may take a long time before men perceive that this law is really an expression of the deepest truths of the kingdom of God, or believe in it thoroughly. Not, therefore, in all likelihood until a day, still far off, has come will the ideals be reached after which

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

socialists strive with, perhaps, little knowledge of the deep-rooted moral evils to be eradicated, and with inadequate economic training; but no one can gainsay the influence which the advocacy of these ideals has already exerted upon society. Within recent years Parliament, as we have seen, has passed many measures which are socialistic in character; and there are few who now maintain that these legislative Acts have not greatly improved the social condition of the people, and have not told upon society in a most beneficial manner. Socialists have urged the application of the loftiest principles to social relationships, and have contended that the purest motives, honour and brotherliness, may become operative factors in man's dealings with man. Their principles and motives may, and indeed do, seem to many far too Utopian. They have, however, carried on their aggressive work, even when its prosecution has entailed opposition and incurred obloquy; but these things have not deterred them from pressing their claims, or from cherishing the hope that their principles will ultimately prevail.

VIII

The debt we owe to socialists is very great. We are, for instance, indebted to them, not exclusively, but in great measure, for the profounder consciousness which we now have of the obligations and privileges of brotherhood. "The idea of the *unity of mankind*," says Professor Edward Caird in his Gifford Lectures, "has within the last century become not merely a

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

dogma, but an almost instinctive presupposition of all civilized men." "We know now, in a way in which it was never known before, that humanity is a genus which has no proper species."¹ It is a nice question whether this consciousness of unity is due to literary, scientific, religious or social agencies. "The spirit of the time" which, as the Master of Balliol finely remarks, "enlists many servants to whom it does not communicate the purpose of the command it issues," must, however, be a product of definite agencies. We do not attribute it entirely to socialists; but they have certainly done much to bring home to men's minds the *unity of mankind*. It is of the very essence of their principles to lay emphasis upon solidarity. Whether consciously or not, they have certainly recalled many forgotten aspects of Christianity. With great insistence they have taught the present generation to realize that all men are brothers; and in doing this they reassert that which St. Paul taught when he affirmed in presence of the cultured but severely exclusive Athenians, that God "made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."² They have also insisted upon service as the note of the highest life; and in this they repeat the teachings of Christ. They have likewise maintained that community of interests marks the highest stage in society, and again in this they re-echo words of St. Paul, who says: "I mean not that other men be eased and ye burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may

¹ *Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. p. 15.

² Acts xvii. 26 (R.V.).

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

also be a supply for their want, that their abundance may also be a supply for your want ; that there may be equality : as it is written, He that hath gathered much hath nothing over ; and he that had gathered little had no lack." ¹ Expositors give, we are aware, to these words a narrower interpretation than that which the Apostle obviously intended ; but narrow interpretations are not uncommon where demands are made for the surrender of possessions, that the condition of the poor may be improved and an equality may obtain. Socialists have, however, done much to correct the narrow views of theologians, economists, and scientists. Nor is this negative work the only service which they have rendered ; for they have also positively called attention to the infinite potentialities of man's moral and social nature, and thus opened up a wide field for inquiry within which the most absorbing human interests lie. The last persons to abandon the old landmarks are the traditional theologian, economist, and scientist. Among an ever-increasing circle of thoughtful men, the first of these has already been condemned because he dogmatically claims to have measured the Divine Purpose ; the second is being severely blamed because he imagines that the content of human life can be expressed by means of mathematico-economic formulæ ; and the third, because he contends that that alone can have a place in the category of existence which can be seen and handled. But despite these teachers, larger views of the Divine Purpose and truer conceptions of human life are being entertained, and we owe

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 13-15.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS

the steady evolution of thought to many thinkers and workers, among whom socialists have a seat or honour, because they have called attention to and emphasized brotherhood with its sacred and tender ties, its privileges and its duties.

But while thus frankly admitting the service which socialists have rendered and the debt we owe to them, we are far from holding that there are adequate reasons for saying that they have a monopoly of truth. If, indeed, one ventured upon a prediction, based on the teachings of history and the operations of economic laws, there would perhaps be good ground for maintaining that, before the highest social life can be reached there must be a reconciliation of individualists and socialists; for the ideal is neither in individualism alone, nor in socialism alone; and, therefore, one of the most important duties of the day is to discover the reconciliation of their differences by means of a deeper unifying principle. Christianity, we venture to say, offers such a principle in its doctrine of the new life given by our Lord Jesus Christ; for to all who respond to His claims and trust in Him He gives "the life that is life indeed;" and this life demands at once the most strenuous individual efforts, and the most brotherly social service.¹ When Plato's doctrine of justice, as that which expresses the sum of all the virtues and is most perfectly realized in the State,² and Hegel's

¹ Christ is and gives the life "by which each individual being is enabled to satisfy its own law of progress, and to minister to the whole of which it is a part" (John xvi. 6).—Bishop Westcott, *in loc.*

² *Vide* pp. 83, 84.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

doctrine of the world-reason, as that which unifies all differences and also finds its widest field for exercise within the rational State,¹ are compared with the key of life which Christianity gives, while we may see and admire much that is good in both of these doctrines, yet the fair and inspiring form of Hope only comes within our vision, heralding the regeneration and reorganization of society, when we welcome the Divine solution of the individual's needs and society's requirements which Christianity presents. But some, who profess Christianity, and many who cannot or will not, range themselves in relation to the economic questions of the day on opposing sides, and refuse to accept terms of agreement. Fortunately, however, the Divine Purpose which works itself out through human history, and by means of the eternal principles of righteousness and love, is stronger than dogmatic opinions; and without question, the drift of events which interpret the Divine Purpose to all who watch them closely is, towards a reconciliation of all that is good and true in individualism and in socialism. When this reconciliation is finally effected, social progress will be assured, and the foundations of society rendered absolutely stable.

¹ *Vide* p. 118.

VIII

The Political Basis of Society

I

POLITICAL art is the corollary of economic science. The science passes by a natural process into the art. Every political act is the visible expression of an economic idea. Politics has thus an economic basis. Economic science unfolds principles; political art makes an application of them. The one may be separated from the other. They are, indeed, often treated apart. The student of social life cannot, however, separate them. The interpretation of social phenomena which he offers necessitates a close observation of their relationship and interdependence. For, to him economics is much more than an academic question. Its value consists in the guidance which it gives to politics. Economic principles inform politics. The root-questions of economics are: How is wealth obtained? How is it used? What is the aim of social actions? What is the social goal? When an answer has been returned to these questions, it becomes the business of political art to

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

discover and apply the agencies by means of which practical effect may be given to them.

Difference of opinion may obtain respecting the selection of agencies, or as to the times when they can be wisely and advantageously employed. Hence arises *party* politics. All honest politicians claim to have the good of the people in view. Speeches delivered at the hustings witness to this claim; but all politicians are not agreed respecting aims and methods, agencies and times. With the differences of *party* politicians the student of social life is not mainly or chiefly concerned. These have little of permanence about them. They are constantly changing. The aims, agencies, and methods of the one party to-day, may become those of the other to-morrow. Political history, indeed, bears abundant testimony to the truism that, with lapse of time and the pressure which comes from the needy, the aims of Whigs have become those of Conservatives, and the ideals of Radicals those of Liberals. Radicals at the present time are passing in large numbers over to the camp of socialists.

Political parties thus change, not as the kaleidoscope, though that is sometimes facetiously affirmed, but in obedience to the laws of progress, the conditions of the operations of which are, clear insight into ethical and economic truths, and a vision of the social ideal. The exponent of the science of human life notes these operations with great care; he is also concerned that the conditions are provided; but that which chiefly interests him is, the steady progress of the race towards a higher social life. A Divine

THE POLITICAL BASIS

Purpose runs through the lives of individuals, who are as threads in the garment that is being woven; but this Purpose runs also through society, and gives to the garment itself both pattern and colour.

II

The political relationships which bind together people having different temperaments, training, and interests, present one of the most instructive studies to which attention can be directed; for, to trace the origin and development of these relationships, and ultimately to discover the laws which bind men together in political organizations is to engage in a task that has a great educational value. It enables us to perceive how political institutions have been formed, and the objects which politicians endeavour to attain.

In the earliest times known to history those who were united by ties of kinship in blood constituted a rudimentary form of society; but mere kinship, as Sir Henry Maine points out,¹ is a too narrow basis for a useful or abiding State. Accordingly the history of political combinations shows that people emerging from savage life, recognised at an early period the need for a broader political bond of union. These were found whenever men, urged by various considerations, settled in a fixed territory which they claimed as their own. Their common interests in the land bound them together; and the same people holding the same land for a length of time came to possess a historical continuity; they acquired a

¹ *Ancient Law*, pp. 128 and 133.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

history, and their historical associations further bound them closely together.

In the development of these initial stages towards political combination, the elements of politics begin to manifest themselves quite distinctly; for people dwelling in a fixed territory are obliged to have and obey laws. There must, for instance, be a ruling power, and the enactments that issue from the ruling power must be willingly obeyed, or enforced. The power may be invested in a single person or in a body of men acting together. "Sovereignty," says Professor Sidgwick, "cannot, strictly speaking, lie legally between two or more persons, or bodies of persons, acting separately";¹ but whatever form it may assume is not at first of so much importance as the recognition that it must exist. The right to make laws and enforce them is essential to the formation and preservation of a State, yet it is not all that is required; for a State is not a single unit, but a combination of units. The ruling authority is one element; the people, or body politic, which submits to law, is another; it also includes the land or territory owned.² It is thus the organized society within a defined place and under definite laws, and "thus a series of affiliated ideas and terms at once

¹ *The Elements of Politics*, p. 17.

² We speak of the United States of America, and mean by the words, people living within defined territories and subject to the constituted authorities in each State. Mr. Raleigh limits the term to the persons in whom "the force of the community" is invested, and speaks of the members of the community as subjects of the State. Vide *Elementary Politics*, p. 34. It is more correct to say that the whole body of the people under one government and in one place is the State.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

come to the surface, such as *Government, Law, Legislation, Executive, Right, Prerogative, Liberty.*"¹

It would be a mistake were it assumed that the evolution through which politics has passed has been rapid. On the contrary, it has been necessarily slow, tentative, and always subject to retrogressions. The difference between a modern State, with all its complicated political issues, and one of ancient times expresses at once the great changes that have taken place and the clearer ideas that are now entertained; but the progress that has been made has not been easily or quickly accomplished. Many difficulties had to be overcome; motives to action had to be purified, and principles had to be carefully examined and tested. These things required time.

III

The political evolution, which we are now in a position for reviewing, has been marked by many outstanding features; but nothing has more deeply left its impress upon politics, and imparted to the science a more distinctive character, than the ends which, at different periods, it had in view. The objects aimed at largely explain the motives that have influenced, and the principles that have guided politicians. The first object to be secured was that of obedience. In the earliest stages methods and means had, therefore, to be devised for securing submission to authority; for there could be no progress if there was no obedience. "In early times," Mr. Bagehot

¹ Vide *The Science of Politics*, by Sheldon Amos, p. 65.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

rightly observes, "the quantity of government is much more important than its quality. What you want is a comprehensive rule binding men together, making them do much the same things, telling them what to expect of each other—fashioning them alike, and keeping them so."¹ Obedience to authority produces fixed customs and habits; and these again give to communities both identity and a more or less settled state. When these things, which enter into the very essence of society, are secured, it is the object of politics to provide the conditions under which the greatest good of the greatest number may be attained;² life and property may be preserved; the freedom of each individual may be guaranteed; and each be enabled to render useful service to the State.

The most difficult, and indeed the most perplexing, problem with which the politician has to deal is, how best to provide these necessary conditions. The history of politics is largely the record of the attempts, more or less successful, that have been made to secure them; but history makes it plain enough that they have never been attained where regard has chiefly been had to the interests of the rulers or governing class. The State does not consist of these alone. It is made up of them and all the

¹ Vide *Physics and Politics*, by Walter Bagehot, p. 25.

² To define the chief end of the State as "securing the greatest happiness of the greatest number" is both inadequate and misleading; for, notwithstanding all that philosophy has said of it, happiness is a state of feeling. The highest good, on the other hand, while embracing feeling, also includes well-being, which again is a term descriptive of a moral end attained by moral means.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

people who reside within a fixed territory. A strong State and a contented people can, therefore, only be secured when the interests of all are kept in view. It is comparatively easy now to see and acknowledge this simple truism of politics, but at one time it was far from easy. Men had to be taught; and it is one of the advantages of the study of political evolution, that we can trace the steps and stages leading up to this now simple truism of politics.

The life of communities is lived under many conditions. Politics, however, in no case aims merely at bare existence. It seeks the very best conditions, in order that under them life, property, and freedom may be enjoyed; but from the time of the inception of any State and onwards, a constant struggle is waged between those in less and those in more favourable situations. Reforms and changes are urged sometimes by revolutionary, and sometimes by more peaceful methods; but almost in every instance reforms are dictated by a sense of need, and spring from the poor. The long and fierce conflict between the Plebeians and Patricians of Rome supply, for instance, an object-lesson as to the strenuous efforts that were made by the less favoured Romans to attain to better conditions; and in all modern States an equally severe struggle is going on. The problem which the politician has, indeed, to solve, is how to reconcile opposing parties, how to remove the grounds of difference between them. In the political evolution now going on, it is being slowly but surely recognised that the best of all solutions generally comes from the people themselves. According even to such a cautious

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

writer as Mr. Bagehot, the voice of the people is the salutary element in politics.¹ Political liberty and progress go together ; and where the great interests of the people are concerned it may be safely assumed that all proposals of reform will be carefully sifted and discussed ; and free discussion is at once a safety-valve for discontent and a guarantee against hasty legislation. In the effort to discover permanent solutions of political problems many powerful States have failed. Rome fell, for instance, as much from the operation of political causes as from that of any other. Her statesmen failed to reconcile opposing sects. The voice of the people, on whom the State's existence chiefly depended, was stifled. Political corruption set in ; self-aggrandisement did its fatal work ; the fall of Rome became inevitable.

A thousand horrid prodigies foretold it ;
A feeble government, eluded laws,
A factious populace, luxurious nobles,
And all the maladies of sinking states.²

The proud Empire gradually declined until the time when Alaric's fierce hordes stood at the walls of Rome ; and at that fatal hour the political degeneracy of the Romans rendered resistance impossible. A different fate has only attended modern States because, with all their defects and shortcomings, they have not been entirely indifferent to the lessons of history, and have in some degree acceded to the demands of the people, and, in more or less measure,

¹ Vide *Physics and Politics*, pp. 175, 176.

² Vide "Speech of Demetrius," in Johnson's *Irene*.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

have permitted them to make their voice and wishes heard in the States of which they are so important an element.

IV

It is highly instructive to trace the steps by which the people in the most advanced and freest countries have attained political rights, and to observe how political principles and maxims of gradually increasing excellence, have come to be adopted. At first, authority rests upon force. The arms of the warrior win the power to impose his will upon the body politic; but mere physical power cannot guarantee the continuance of a State. If it alone be relied on, the community so ruled sooner or later comes to an end. It is not in the nature of things that it can long endure. Permanence is only secured when a throne is "broad-based upon the people's will." The basis of mere might is narrow; that of aristocratic rule is a little broader; that of the people is broadest of all; and when the people are informed, educated, and obedient to the claims of righteousness and the dictates of the moral law, the foundations of society are deep and strong. History, therefore, makes it abundantly manifest, that nations which have survived for a long period have existed in virtue of the introduction of intellectual and ethical factors, which guide mere physical power into right courses of action. Within the sphere of politics these enlightened and enlightening elements make their influence felt in resisting and setting aside indefensible customs, in curbing the will of the autocrat, and in giving to the

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

people a share in regulating the affairs of the State. Intellectual activity and a high moral consciousness are incompatible with obedience to mere custom or authority based on might. When men begin to reflect and discuss, they realize this personal responsibility, and, being responsible, they demand freedom. Their will must tell upon the State. Their interest in the prosperity of the country justifies their interference in its government; and once having seen these things, they claim them as their inalienable right. English history in a notable manner illustrates the operations of the intellectual faculty and ethics as applied to political issues. For a long time the struggle was waged between feudal lords and the king, and at a later period between the aristocracy and the democracy. Now the one and now the other prevailed; but that which ultimately gained the victory was not physical power, but the intellectual and moral elements that were introduced into the national life and gave it vitality. In their silent yet powerful operations these elements created aspirations that could not be satisfied until the people were invested with a measure of political power; and as ethical conceptions of duty and privilege became clearer a correspondingly larger demand was made for greater political power. Though the people were not always conscious of the moral influences which impelled them to action, nevertheless they obeyed them; and as obedience to moral laws always implies, and indeed confers education, the people not only won parliamentary representation, but were also, to a certain extent, prepared to exercise the political duties which

THE POLITICAL BASIS

accompany "popular intervention in Government," the note, according to Professor Amos, of a *Constitution*.

To exercise the privileges and duties of the franchise rightly is, however, far from an easy task. The ethical condition of a people is the measure of their fitness for being entrusted with political power. It is, therefore, always a dangerous experiment to put such power into the hands of men just emerging from a savage life, or to give it to those who have been long subjected to oppression. They are not fitted to exercise the franchise. They are, indeed, almost certain to abuse it, and in their ignorance, their minds being devoid of right ideas and their moral nature untrained, they inevitably throw themselves further back; for when a careful analysis is made of the content of politics it is discovered that politics itself is the outward and visible expression of the ethical and economic ideas that are at any given time entertained. Behind all political movements these ideas lie, and to a large extent determine their force and direction.

The need, therefore, for training, both on the part of a people who enjoy the privileges of a *constitutional government* and of those who represent them in Parliament, is imperative. The mere possession of wealth or social position is not enough. Unfortunately, however, these, in too many instances, are the passports to a place in the Representative Assembly. The wealth of the rich man who has also leisure, and the accident of birth, are too frequently regarded as sufficient recommendations. It is true that the elec-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

torate have to be consulted; but if the composition of, say, the House of Commons be examined, it will be found that the qualifications based on wealth or birth have had most to do in giving many of the members a seat in it; for the rich can still command many votes that are denied to the poor, however well the latter may be otherwise endowed.

Complaint is often made that the people invested with political power are not sufficiently informed. There is, it is true, only too much reason for this complaint; but, on the other hand, the need for political education, meaning by this an informed mind and high ethical and economic ideals on the part of the people's representatives, is even more urgent; for, among other things, it is their duty to educate the electorate; to expound economic principles of action; and to set before the people the highest ethics. Not otherwise can a State be strong and healthy; not otherwise can it have the elements of endurance; for if members of Parliament be ignorant of the constituent elements of society, their votes will be cast at hap-hazard; and thus incalculable harm be done. Considerations like these, therefore, supply the strongest argument against lack of wealth continuing to be a barrier to the highest service being rendered to the State. The right to interfere and to make their voice heard in political affairs has been won by the people at a great cost; and it ought to be open to the poor as well as to the rich man, to find a seat in the House of Representatives. Neither the possession nor lack of wealth is a sufficient recommendation; the only recommen-

THE POLITICAL BASIS

dations that are valid are intelligence, moral worth, and willingness to render service; and the man who possesses these qualities alone can help to make society better and the State stronger.

V

Attention is called to these things because Parliamentarianism is now on its trial. In common with other countries, we aim at finding the best methods and agencies through the use of which the greatest potentialities of the people may be evoked, and the highest life lived; but no informed person can be ignorant of the questions that are raised and keenly debated at the present time—the questions whether the people's wishes are adequately represented by the representative Parliamentary system, and whether Parliament itself is the best agency for developing the national life.

1. The issues involved in the first of these questions are seen if we compare the political conditions of our own country with those of such a politically advanced country as Switzerland, which has already passed through the two stages of aristocratic government and representative democracy. The latter stage corresponds with that at which we have arrived. We have got past the aristocratic, and have got down to the democratic; but democracy is not yet sovereign. A further stage of development is possible, as the political life of Switzerland shows. Rightly or wrongly, the Swiss people came to the conclusion that the general good was, under representative

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

democracy, sacrificed to party or personal interest, and so "they brought about," as M. Louis Wuarin says, "the development of direct democracy."¹ The *Referendum*, in its compulsory and optional forms, the *Initiative* and *Proportional Representative*, have been, therefore, adopted as means through which the people may have a more direct control of all that belongs to the government of the country.² Their object is to make the people's voice heard, and, in the last resort, their will supreme. The political situation in Switzerland is the logical development of democracy. If the political maxim that "the will of the people" must prevail be accepted, the practical question alone remains to be answered, whether representative or 'direct democracy' best secures the execution of the will of the majority.

In attempting to solve the problem thus presented, it needs to be said, on the one hand, that many of the advocates of representative government are in favour of making representation more complete and perfect by such reforms as, removing the barriers which at present prevent the working man from easily entering Parliament; and, on the other hand, that many of those who, dissatisfied with the representative system unchecked by a reference to the people's wishes, decide for 'direct democracy,' are far from

¹ Vide *Progress. Rev.*, July 1897.

² Proportional representation has only been partially adopted. Six cantons have already applied it; but it has not yet been applied in the Federal sphere. M. Deploige, in his work, *The Referendum in Switzerland*, translated by C. P. Trevelyan, has given an elaborate account of the Swiss Constitution.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

allowing that the Swiss method is the best, or the only possible method by which it can be given effect to. The Referendum is being tested and tried. It may be that its defects can be rectified; or it may transpire again, as it has so often taken place in the past, that the slow evolution of events may bring about a more perfect method. The best *Constitutions*, as the history of politics shows, are not those that have been formally drafted by theorists, but rather those that have been formed by the course of events, and are unwritten; and it may happen that the irresistible tide of popular opinion will effect such developments in the political life of a nation, like our own, as will give the people greater control over cabinets and political parties.

This, however, is at best only problematical; and, therefore, taking the facts with which we have to deal, two advantages are enjoyed in trying to answer the question whether representative or 'direct democracy' be the better system. *First*, in Switzerland we see the latter in operation, and have, therefore, a useful object-lesson which enables us to understand it better than could be possible if it were only a theory. It is not claimed for 'direct democracy' that it is perfect; it is frankly allowed that it may lead to the passing of Acts that would tell seriously against the welfare of the nation; but hitherto, and this deserves special notice, so far from hasty legislation taking place, whenever proposals, such as were made by socialists in November, 1893, have been brought forward, they have been negatived by overwhelming numbers. On the other hand, 'direct

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

democracy' has had salutary results which even its bitterest opponents recognise. It has, for instance, as M. Wuarin shows, reconciled minorities in the State by giving them a more powerful influence where formerly they were hopelessly in a minority. It is the complement and correction of representative government. It has also been a great educative agency; if, indeed, the view which Mr. Bagehot has elaborated in his *Physics and Politics* be accepted, according to which, the more discussion takes place, you have the healthier political life, and the more principles are debated, you have greater progress; if it be also conceded that the greater interest people take in politics the greater are the advances that are made, then the Swiss system, which throws enormous responsibilities upon the people by obliging them to cast their vote on many important questions, must be pronounced one of the best, and must further be held to be an advance upon the representative régime.

But, *second*, from the long experience which we have had of representative government we are familiar with both its benefits and defects; and this enables us therefore, to perceive wherein further salutary political developments are possible. When compared with the system which it superseded, there can be no question as to the benefits which representative government confers. The many reforms that have been effected by the Legislature bear witness to the influence which the people have exercised through their representatives. Parliament, indeed, within recent years, in passing measures which give the people greater political power, has been guided to a large extent by

THE POLITICAL BASIS

what was held to be for the good of the nation as a whole, and in the line of the people's wishes. But when these acknowledgments have been made, there still remain many things that a country bent upon attaining the greatest political progress has a right to demand; and if these cannot be secured under the present *régime*, then it is the duty of politicians to discover another and more effective method. The Swiss system is not the only possible one that may secure the objects aimed at. It may, for instance, be more in the line of past developments and the genius of the people of the United Kingdom to adopt a system of devolution. Local Parliaments, elected every three years, as County, Parish, and Burgh Councils, and School Boards are at present, may be more advantageous and give the people a more direct control over the affairs of the State; but whether future developments will be in this direction or after the Swiss example, it is plain enough that changes must be effected. Under the present representative system whenever a strong Government, be it Liberal or Conservative, gets into power, relying on its obedient majority, it often passes measures respecting which the people have not been consulted. This is, indeed, constantly taking place; and the political evils it produces are quite patent. It entails waste of Parliamentary time; for such legislation is sure to be rediscussed and amended whenever the opposite party comes into power, and a great amount of time is spent upon correcting measures which, if they had been sanctioned by the people, could not, at least for a long period, be disturbed. But waste of time is not the

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

only loss; for legislation which the electorate have not approved generally confers advantages upon one class, and that means for all other classes a corresponding loss. Again, under our representative system needless expense is often incurred and much energy wasted in resisting measures proposed by the wealthy in their own interests. The lack of direct control on the part of the people makes such measures possible, and the same lack frequently explains how it is that the people so often fail to resist successfully the passing of these measures. They thus failing, political discontent sets in; and a nation cannot be really strong where a sense of injustice prevails.

The political dissatisfaction produced by aristocratic government led ultimately to its overthrow, and in the process of its overthrow incalculable injury was done to the State; for great political changes cannot be effected apart from much suffering. The affairs of the State are now under a new power; but the influence of the mercantile party which has largely supplanted the aristocratic rule, tells in directions where the influence of the former *régime* was scarcely felt, and has issued in results some of which are good and salutary, but others such as evoke all that is most unlovely in human character. The aristocrat had in former times some regard for those who toiled for him; he often took a paternal interest in them, and whole generations, father and son in succession, occupied the same lands. But under the new power workers are frequently treated as mere "hands," without adequate regard to their moral claims; and within the sphere of politics proper, the advocates

THE POLITICAL BASIS

of the severe individualism of the Manchester school hold themselves to be justified in taking advantage of every political situation that promises to further their ends. For is not, in their judgment, life a battle and each man entitled to try and overcome all who oppose him? Is it not right to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market? to take advantage of every political agency that furthers one's personal aims? The effect of the triumph of this school of politicians has been to permeate the nation with materialism. The man who "gets on," no matter by what means, is esteemed; wealth opens the doors of 'society,' and, therefore, intellectual and moral pursuits being at a discount—for even the literature of the day is estimated by the market price it brings—whatever, and only whatever, appeals to the eye and hand is valuable.

It is a nice psychological question whether politics reflects "the spirit of the age," or whether that spirit is largely produced by economic and political factors. Certainly one of the most formative influences in a nation's life is its politics. The ethical and economic principles applied to State affairs are applied also to business and other relationships. Statesmen have necessarily great influence; they are imitated, and their ethics becomes the standard of the people's actions. The counter influence of a great writer like Carlyle or Ruskin, or that of religious teachers, may compete against them, but the power they exercise in the higher social circles, the honours and positions of privilege they have at their disposal, and the ready access they have to the ear of the nation through the

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

public press, go a long way to make the balance turn in their favour ; and, therefore, whatever principles they adopt must ultimately tell upon certain classes of the people. They set up ideals which may even influence literary work and are almost certain to prevail in 'society.' A people seldom reaches a higher level than that of its leaders ; and since political leaders have the widest sphere of influence, they become models that are closely copied. Without controversy, the grasping greed and severe individualism that have prevailed in our politics are sufficiently reflected in business and in our social life.

A person must be very blind who fails to see why it is that socialism, with its doctrine of brotherhood, has laid hold upon, and is every day having greater influence among working people ; for, it is really in its deepest essence a loud protest against the materialism and greed which the politics of the day does so much to encourage. There are, it is true, socialists who also limit themselves to material things ; *condition* and not *character* is that at which they aim ; but socialism, rightly understood, is a protest against materialism ; it owes the success that has attended it, chiefly to its insistence upon the moral elements in life, brotherhood, and unity of interests. It is, therefore, one of the most powerful factors in the political evolution going on. All its ideals may not be reached. Many of them may be found to be unattainable, or even, if attainable, unnecessary and undesirable ; but however these things may end, it is beyond question that the political life of the day is being largely influenced by it. The individualism which has so deeply stamped

THE POLITICAL BASIS

politics is being corrected by socialism, as recent Acts of Parliament prove.

Now, just as aristocratic government had to give way to partially representative rule, the latter, again, because it still disregards too much the wishes of the people and unduly favours wealth, must become entirely representative, and give to the electorate direct control. The question as to what form this control will take is of less importance than that of the recognition of its necessity; for once let the people be awakened to a sense of the evils from which they suffer, and the method of redress will be settled by political developments in the line of their history or as their genius dictates. Attention may, as we have already seen, be directed to the popular control which is secured under the Swiss political system; or, what is perhaps more likely, the people may find sufficient control over legislation by the adoption of National Parliaments elected every three or four years and on the same day, to prevent plural and fagot voting. No great inconvenience is experienced by the election on the same day of Parish and Burgh Councils; and, at the utmost, only a little more would be entailed if the members of these Parliaments were elected on a given day.

2 The manifest defects of the representative Parliamentary system raise not only the important question just considered, but the still larger issue, whether Parliamentarianism in any form is the best agency for developing the national life, and evoking the moral potentialities of the people. This question is pressed to the front and demands consideration in view of the attitude which has recently been taken by the leaders

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of thought and political classes in Russia; for the country over which the Czar rules with absolute sway does more than claim a position of influence as a great military power; her writers and statesmen also maintain that when the political, social and religious life of Russia is compared with that of any Western State, hers is seen to be higher and better. Slavophilism is confidently set against Occidentalism, and that, too, even though in making a comparison the most perfect State in Europe be selected; for the Slavophile contends that when you take the politics of the different States of Europe, and make choice of that which is judged to be the best, you only require to ask, what are the last and highest results of Western civilization—of which Parliamentaryism is one of the principal notes—and then set these against those of Slavophilism, and it will be quite plain that the principles which govern Russian life are higher than those which obtain in the most developed Western State.

The relative merits of the two systems are not so easily estimated as might at first sight appear. There is, for instance, no third and competent party to whom an appeal can be made.

So far as Russia is concerned—and it is the home of Slavophilism—though Russian literature has to submit to the censor, and Russian subjects are denied constitutional methods through which reforms may be carried, still there are means open to the clearest-sighted thinkers and politicians of Russia for making their judgments and conclusions known. When these are ascertained, it is seen that Russian writers main-

THE POLITICAL BASIS

tain, on the one hand, that Slavophilism develops best the highest powers of the people ; and, on the other, that Western civilization has been largely a failure, because it has been chiefly concerned, not with moral or spiritual development, but with material success.

It is only the superficial observer who will venture to dismiss these contentions hastily and without examination. There is something to be said for them, for Russian thinkers have endeavoured to penetrate beneath the surface of things and to ascertain the essential elements of society. They may have in their investigations overlooked important data, and in their conclusions made inaccurate generalizations ; they may even have set up a false standard of prosperity ; but it cannot be said that they have not seen clearly the development of the politics of Western civilization, and traced political ideas back to their psychological, ethical, and economic roots. On the contrary, their writings bear evidence that they have seen and carefully noted the psychological data that have been postulated, and the utilitarianism and severe individualism that have naturally sprung from them ; they have also taken note of the stress laid upon the physical sciences, and the elimination of all ethical elements save such as are hedonistic, and how in consequence there have ensued economic materialism and political opportunism, which cannot have regard for the highest interests of man. The judgments and conclusions of Professor Karéieff are, as M. Bogdanovitch shows,¹ accepted by writers like

¹ Vide *Athenæum*, July 3, 1879.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Slonimski, Khomiakoff, A. Herzen and others; and, according to Professor Karéieff, "from the historico-philosophical point of view, economic materialism has proved itself destitute of a scientific basis, as well as lacking in adequately minute treatment, and does not correspond to the present position of sociology;" while A. A. Kiréieff says that the electorate of Western States care more for material property than "ideas or principles such as equality or liberty," and, assuming the form of industrial associations, "send to Parliament not the most virtuous men, but the most clever, intelligent, and expert lawyers, capable of defending and winning their case in Parliament."¹

It is always an easy task to point out the defects of a system which one opposes, and thus to discredit it; but to succeed in such a task does not necessarily imply either that the *régime* opposed to it is better, or that the system assailed cannot be improved. Many notable instances might be cited to prove how easy it is to criticise a system without at the same time being able to offer a better; but perhaps the most notable is that supplied by the criticisms of Mr. Spencer, respecting whom Professor Amos gives his deliberate judgment, when he says that "Mr. Herbert Spencer, with his masterly command of illustration, mainly confines himself to dwelling on all the disadvantages and disabling weakness which follow from reliance on government aid without

¹ M. Pobyedonostseff, Procurator of the Holy Synod of Russia, in his *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*, translated by R. C. Long, repeats in detail the arguments against Parliamentaryism given above.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

considering historically how this reliance sprang up, and how, consequently, it can, as things are, be dispensed with."¹ Where Mr. Spencer has failed M. Karéieff has not succeeded; and though he may have described with more or less, perhaps less rather than more, accuracy the political situation of Western States, he is far thereby from showing that the political absolutism of Russia affords a good substitute for Parliamentarianism. Members of Parliament, it must be admitted, are not always well informed as to the great and often momentous questions with which they have to deal. They have in few cases had such a political education as is necessary. Many of them know almost nothing of the deeper economic principles on which politics rests; and it must be further confessed that a political life is often chosen for no higher motive than that of desiring to have and exercise power, or to gain access to what is regarded as higher social circles. But even when all these defects are taken into consideration and Parliamentary freedom is set over against political absolutism, the benefits of the former far outweigh those of the latter. Slavophilism may be "the eloquent expression of the faith and the feelings of the Russian people;" its advocates may "propagate nationality, uphold Russian views and put forward as their principle absolutism,"² but these neither exhaust man's duties nor provide the conditions for the highest developments, political, moral, and social. To be in a position for discharging all

¹ Vide *The Science of Politics*, p. 372.

² Vide L. A. de Bogdanovitch in *Athenæum*, July 30, 1897.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

his obligations man needs to perceive that his responsibilities extend beyond the narrow limits of his own country, while to evoke all his potentialities his orthodoxy must be something other than the hard and fast views of the Russian Church, and his political freedom something greater than that which the rule of an autocrat guarantees.

It would, therefore, be a retrograde step to abandon Parliamentary representation; and the country that has not attained it cannot be politically free. But the representative system can be made more perfect. Its defects may be removed by political education, and by higher motives to service being insisted on. The electorate and representatives alike need a clearer insight into the principles of which politics is the visible expression, and a firmer grasp of the social problems that demand solution. And where political education is adequate there will be, as its accompaniment, purer motives to service. For an investigation cannot be made respecting the deeper principles which underlie life without it being also seen, that the highest life is really lived when the common good of others, and not one's own interests, is the motive to service.

VI

Political education, however, is not enough; an effort must be made to improve the political system, for in political agencies, as in political ideals, there is no finality. There are many directions in which improvements may be effected. Already reference

THE POLITICAL BASIS

has been made to the need for greater control over the actions of members of Parliament in their representative capacity; and the two methods of securing such control have also been indicated; but a question of equal importance is that of the relation of the Cabinet, and the heads of State Departments who are invested with vast powers of administration, to the Representative Assembly. Professor Sidgwick acknowledges that the chief executive and administrative posts generally fall to Parliamentary leaders, distinguished rather "for oratorical gifts and Parliamentary tact than for administrative talent;" and further, that "the prize thus offered to Parliamentary ambitions is likely to stimulate intrigues and combinations for personal ends."¹

When the destinies of a country are put into the hands of such men, the danger that threatens its welfare becomes very great; for notwithstanding all that has been urged by Mr. Bagehot in his work on the English Constitution, in favour of Cabinet Government, the country may be committed to a policy in relation to foreign States, the merits or demerits of which the people have had no opportunity of judging, and great harm be done without regard to their wishes and interests. And, even in relation to merely administrative actions it often happens that the head of a department, being incompetent, allows matters to drift without taking an intelligent supervision of them, or makes proposals and formulates schemes that are unworkable. The remedies for these evils—such as making the monarch independent of the Legis-

¹ Vide *The Elements of Politics*, p. 411.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

lature in the selection of his ministers; or the procedure followed in the United States of America, where the Legislature and the Executive are separated from each other; or the system of Periodical Executive proposed by Professor Sidgwick, in which election to office would be either by the Legislature or directly by the people¹—have been advocated by publicists of distinction; but any system which fails to bring into closest touch the people and those who represent them, whether as members of an Executive or Legislature, cannot obviate the dangers which have been specified; and, therefore, the direction in which we must turn is that where “government by the people for the people” obtains. It does not so much matter whether the Executive be chosen by the monarch, or by the Legislature, or directly by the people, as that the action of the Executive should be submitted to the people’s judgment and approval; and this can only be effectively accomplished, if provision be made in the country’s Constitution for an appeal to the electorate at fixed periods, between which a great amount of time should not elapse.

VII

But in addition to the question of the relation of the Cabinet and of State Departments to the Representative Assembly, there is the further question of the need for, and functions of, a Second Chamber. Within recent years this question has come within the sphere of practical politics. There is, indeed,

¹ *The Elements of Politics*, p. 430.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

scarcely any other constitutional problem at the present time which is demanding and receiving more attention. All politicians discuss it. The conclusions to which they come are marked by great variety of opinion. Where, therefore, there is such difference of judgment great care must be taken as to the spirit in which discussions are carried on, and the method of investigation that is adopted. This question should not be considered from the standpoint of party politicians, but in that scientific spirit which aims at ascertaining what is right and in the interests of society.

There are well-defined principles which guide us in thus considering the need for a Second Chamber. That which makes for the welfare of the people and the stability of society must have a prominent place in any proposal for reforms which may be made. The lessons which political history teaches, and experience suggests, must also be taken into account. Second Chambers have not always existed. During the whole of the Anglo-Norman, and the greater part of the Plantagenet, period there was only one Chamber in England. The Scottish Parliament did not at any time consist of two Houses. Those, therefore, who hesitate to touch ancient institutions with the hand of reform have not much, in this instance, of which to be afraid. The establishment of the House of Lords as a separate body of law makers was due to the barons, who aimed at holding the power which they had wrested from the king with the aid of their retainers. The recognition of an Upper House, as distinct from the House of Com-

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

mons, was a political compromise, at a time when the people had few opportunities of expressing their wishes, and little power to enforce their views. But now the whole aspect of political life is changed; and it is a legitimate enough question to raise, whether an institution, established when the political conditions were entirely different from those which now obtain, serves a useful purpose to-day. It is generally assumed by those who defend the House of Lords that its chief function is to act as a safeguard against hasty and ill-considered legislation. That is, indeed, the main ground upon which nine out of ten men now uphold it. We shall refer to this argument; but for the moment it needs to be said, and kept in mind, that originally the members of the House of Lords claimed the right to legislate because they represented their retainers. The best men in the House of Lords to-day also claim that they have the right to legislate, though they frankly recognise that they hold no mandate from the people, and represent no one but themselves. These scout the idea that their chief function is to act as a check upon hasty legislation. Defenders of the House of Lords among the electorate generally, however, urge the idea of a safeguard as their strongest argument. Let us see what it amounts to. On all sides it is confessed that the usefulness of a Second Chamber has come to the front as a definite political issue, because an Upper House has seldom answered the ends for which it is supposed to have been constituted. But a Second Chamber, as we have just stated, is assumed to be, at least, a guarantee against rash legislative action

THE POLITICAL BASIS

on the part of the Lower House. If, however, it does not secure this special and particular end, the question of its usefulness at once arises. Take the House of Lords as an illustration. It concerns us chiefly. Besides, the contention is often urged that the British constitution is excelled by none. Mr. Bagehot has stated in detail the advantages of an Upper House,¹ and has been followed with approval by several recent writers ; but he is far from holding that the present House of Lords is an ideal body. Mr. Bagehot writes from the point of view of a Whig or Conservative-Liberal,² and his strictures may, therefore, be taken as having been made without bias. Nevertheless he makes the strong statement: "The House of Lords," he says, "being an hereditary Chamber, cannot be of more than common ability."³ It is incapable of doing the work assigned to it,⁴ and it often even fails to make a trial of it. "Less favourable critics than Mr. Bagehot," says Sir Spencer Walpole, "would perhaps contend that the functions of the peers are limited by their prudence ; that they revise those measures most carefully on which the public mind is the least excited ; and that a hereditary Chamber cannot, from its very nature, take any other course."⁵ The judgment of Mr. Bagehot on the House of Lords is, however, severe enough.

¹ *The English Constitution*, pp. 107-110.

² *Vide* Advertisement to *Essays on Parliamentary Reform*, by Walter Bagehot, p. 5.

³ *The English Constitution*, p. 117.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 120, 121.

⁵ *Vide* *The Electorate and the Legislature*, p. 43.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

"It is," he concludes, "quite safe against rough destruction, but it is not safe against inward decay. . . . Its danger is not in assassination, but atrophy; not in abolition, but decline."¹ To this we may add that an institution in danger of extinction for these reasons stands already condemned. Whatever else it may be, it cannot be a safeguard.

But ethical theory enters into this constitutional question. It is the boast of many English publicists that the English constitution rests upon utility. If, then, we take the old ethical ground, beloved of Hobbes, Hume, and Bentham, and inquire how far a Second Chamber is defensible on that ground, it is difficult to discover in the actions of the House of Lords a justification for its existence. With a few notable exceptions, the legislation of the Upper House has been marked by regard for class interests. It has seldom furthered, while it has often opposed, the welfare of the people. We cannot, indeed, look for the solution of this question in the operations of utilitarian principles, for utilitarianism is discredited, both as a political and moral theory. We rely upon the sounder ethical principle, that political institutions must minister to the good of the people. It is very remarkable that publicists, who have long been wedded to utilitarianism, should have within recent years declared strongly for the views that "the people is the true legislator," and that the House of Commons is supreme. "In the last resort," says Sir Frederick Pollock, "there is only one power."² The

¹ *The Electorate and the Legislature*, p. 129.

² *History of the Science of Politics*, p. 108.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

question respecting the balance of constitutional powers has been solved by the two great statutes, *The Bill of Rights* and *The Act of Settlement*, in favour of the House of Commons ; and it is now the duty of statesmen to give practical effect to the theoretically declared supremacy of the Representative Assembly. In view of the pronounced opinion of eminent publicists, the House of Lords is a political anachronism. A country cannot fulfil its high destiny if institutions be allowed to continue which have no higher recommendation than that a certain amount of utility has been secured by their existence. Nothing but the maximum of good ought to be accepted as the standard of political institutions ; and where they come short of such a standard it is evident that they ought to be supplanted by better agencies.

No one at the present time makes a serious attempt to justify the existence of the House of Lords as it is constituted. Its defects are obvious enough, and are fully recognised. There are, however, many who think that a reformed or an amended House of Lords is a possibility, and for this they labour on the platform and in the Press. As these advocates of a reformed Second Chamber look abroad they have not much to encourage them. With the exception of the Swiss Council of States, the American and French Senates, all other Upper Houses are constructed on the most exclusive principles. The Austrian Senate, for instance, is composed of hereditary peers and life members ; the Italian of literary, scientific and rich men selected by the Crown ; and the German of members appointed by the Governments belonging

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

to the Empire. The members of the Swiss Council of States are elected, in some instances, directly by the people in some Cantons, and in others by Cantonal bodies. The French Senate is composed of life members and elected representatives; and the American of representatives from the different States, chosen by the Legislature of the respective States. Men holding closely guarded positions of power and honour do not readily surrender them; and when members of the House of Lords can point to the privileges enjoyed by members of other Senates, they will not forego the positions which they hold without a struggle. To many of them it seems, indeed, the veriest effrontery that proposals should be made to curtail their privileges; and since they entertain such views, it may be anticipated that the reform of the House of Lords will be of a most partial kind.

Those, however, who aim at reform are hopeful. The political stability to which we have attained, after a long and varied experience, ought, they think, to render it possible for the Government to trust the people in electing to seats in a Second Chamber men of their own choice, without respect to hereditary or literary claims, or claims based on wealth. Election, they hold, might be for a definite number of years, and the House entrusted with reviewing legislation and the exercise of the veto within defined limits.¹

¹ The *Speaker* has recently devoted a number of articles to the question of the House of Lords, and in relation to the veto, suggests that it should be limited to one year. "A measure which the House of Commons has carried in one session, and which has

THE POLITICAL BASIS

Some such proposal as this, they contend, must be tried; for the science of politics, they further urge, makes it quite plain that useful and just legislation can only be enacted, and the people rendered content, when their voices are the most distinctive element in the choice of law makers. But insisting upon representation raises, again, the whole question of the need of a Second Chamber; for why should there be a Second House, if its chief note is to be its representative character? That feature is already secured in the Popular Assembly; and it is somewhat difficult to perceive what good can be secured by a second representative House. The constant conflicts that go on between the two houses in America, as described by Mr. Bryce,¹ afford little encouragement to those who think that an Upper House is necessary. Mr. Bryce has done his best to extenuate the differences by saying that the quarrels are professional and personal; but they exist, and reflect adversely upon the system. It would be a much better system if, as many distinguished publicists and politicians hold, members of Parliament, elected by the people, were really responsible to the people by being obliged to appeal to them for authority for the measures proposed. For, if it be admitted, as we have seen it is by nearly all publicists, that "the people is the legislator," then provision ought to be made for the

been rejected by the Lords, shall, if carried a second time through the House of Commons in the next session, receive the Sovereign's assent, whether the Lords agree to it or not."—*Vide the Speaker*, March 19, 1898.

¹ *Vide The American Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 183.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

people having a direct and easily expressed influence on Parliament.

One method by which this influence could be expressed is that of shorter Parliaments; another is that of the Referendum. Shorter Parliaments would certainly ensure the people's judgment being ascertained respecting legislative proposals; but it is objected that to shorten the time of Parliaments would entail great hardships, and throw the country into confusion, say, every two or three years. Edmund Burke, a century ago, employed arguments against triennial Parliaments which some people may still hold to be valid;¹ but the very exaggeration of his language, to say nothing as to the changed political conditions under which political duties are now discharged, renders his arguments beside the mark. If elections were held on the same day throughout the whole United Kingdom, the hardships would not be great, while the advantage derived from the people having a direct voice in

¹ "In my opinion," says Burke, "the shortness of a triennial sitting would have the following ill effects:—it would make the member more shamelessly and shockingly corrupt; it would increase his dependence on those who could best support him at his election; it would wreck and tear to pieces the fortunes of those who stood upon their own fortunes and their private interest; it would make the electors infinitely more venal; and it would make the whole body of the people who are, whether they have votes or not, concerned in elections, more lawless, more idle, more debauched; it would utterly destroy the sobriety, the industry, the integrity, the simplicity of all the people; and undermine, I am much afraid, the deepest and best-laid foundations of the Commonwealth."—*Burke's Works*, vol. x. p. 88.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

legislative proposals would far outweigh any inconvenience which might be entailed.

There are many politicians who hold that the most effective check upon rash legislation, and, at the same time, a substitute for the vetoing power of the House of Lords, would be a provision requiring a certain majority of the members of the House of Commons before a measure could be placed on the Statute Book. In the event of a measure having the support of only a small majority, they propose that the measure should be set aside for, say, eighteen months or two years, in order to give the people time to consider and make their wishes known with respect to it; and that if at the end of this period a majority, whether great or small, be secured for the measure, it should then become law. For this safeguard much can be said if shorter Parliaments are the rule. In any case it is the deliberate conclusion of many politicians who have had, as members of the House of Commons, a large experience, and have seen the ruthless manner in which many good measures have been destroyed or indefinitely delayed by the House of Lords.

But many who are dissatisfied with the House of Lords as a political institution look rather to the adoption and use of the Referendum than to shorter Parliaments as the agency which would give the people the most direct control over legislative measures. Within recent years the Referendum has attracted much attention.¹ The rapidity and accuracy with which the public Press informs the people respecting any legislative proposals remove

¹ *Vide* Professor Dicey in *Cont. Rev.* 1890, and *Nat. Rev.* 1894.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

many of the objections which were at one time taken to the Referendum; for it was held that the people could not possibly know the merits of the questions at issue. But all this is now changed; and if any measure were submitted to their judgment, the people would at least be informed, and so far prepared to give an intelligent answer. But it is said that the Referendum already exists; for the House of Lords refers questions to the country when it exercises its veto, and obliges the Government of the day to appeal to the people. This, however, is entrusting the Referendum to a select and irresponsible body. If it be advantageous to have the Referendum, it ought to be possible to employ it on all occasions when great constitutional issues hang in the balance. An appeal to the electorate by means of it would be the best safeguard against ill-considered legislation. It is a notable circumstance, as already stated, that in Switzerland, where the Referendum is frequently employed, there is scarcely a single instance of drastic measures receiving the consent of the great body of the people. There, as elsewhere, public discussion and the responsibility attaching to giving one's vote, have a sobering and restraining influence upon hasty and rash legislation. We do not hold that the people are always wisely guided; nor do we attach a superstitious value to the will of the people. We do not say that *vox populi* is always *vox Dei*. The people have often gone astray; they are also easily misled; but when allowance is made for all their defects, their voice is the salutary element in politics; and looking down the long line of our history, we see that

THE POLITICAL BASIS

every political conflict has been waged on the ground of the people's inalienable rights ; and because of these rights, victory, sometimes partial, sometimes more complete, has been on their side. Had it been otherwise, the country must have shared the fate of those kingdoms which, as history shows, have fallen as much from political as from any other causes ; and, therefore, if our future is to be still brighter and better, and society still more stable, effect must be given in our political institutions to the will of the people.

VIII

But assuming that the wishes of the people are ascertained, we have to inquire what are the affairs in which Government may interfere. The question of the Constitution of Government, says Stuart Mill, has on previous occasions been one of much controversy, but the equally important question is raised, "to what department of human affairs that authority should extend. And," he adds, "when the tide sets so strongly towards changes in government and legislation as a means of improving the condition of mankind, this discussion is more likely to increase than diminish in interest."¹ This prediction has been literally fulfilled ; for the issues raised by social reformers have made this one of the most vital questions of the day. Professor Amos avers² that Mill "scarcely lingers to propound all the principles

¹ Vide *Principles of Political Economy*, book v. chapter i. p. 479.

² Vide *The Science of Politics*, p. 372.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of judgment which must guide the statesman when to act and when to refrain from acting"; but, as Mr. Cliffe Leslie points out, Mill in his later years "much enlarged the scope and system of economic investigation;"¹ and certainly in his *Chapters on Socialism* he has made, if not an exhaustive, yet a most suggestive contribution to the question as to the affairs in which Government may interfere.

Until within quite recent times the proposals which the Cabinet have submitted to Parliament have generally been of such a character as to confer or confirm privileges upon certain classes; but this feature of the legislative action has been of late greatly modified, and that because the righteous discontent of the people has pressed reforms to the front. We are, however, far from having got rid of class legislation. With governments, as with individuals, it is difficult to break away from traditional practices. In the past, monopolies "of land, of capital, and of place"² have been freely granted. The land with unearned increment, the enormous advantages conferred upon banks of issue, and positions of power assigned to a few, do, indeed, show plainly where the Government has interfered, and that, too, to the disadvantage and injury of the great mass of the people; but now, when the advocates of a *laissez-faire* policy speak, it is generally not to advert to these monopolies, but rather to say that questions respecting *prices, contracts, etc.*, are beyond the province of Government. The

¹ *Vide* "Political Economy and Sociology," in *Fortnightly Review*, January 1879.

² *Vide* Newman Smyth's *Christian Ethics*, p. 448.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

question as to what wages a master ought to pay his workmen cannot be directly fixed by the Legislature ; but, on the other hand, the principles which statesmen and politicians hold and advocate indirectly react upon *prices*, and still more upon the elements which go to make society. It is, for instance, now generally recognised that the principle of the Manchester school, which inculcates buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market, has very frequently led to the production of inferior articles ; and that such production has told severely upon morals, and has really affected the stability of society. This same principle also, when traced to its roots, has affected *prices*, and given birth to the cry for "a living wage." But more directly, *prices* are affected by the monetary laws enacted by Parliament, for in their final analysis *prices* are the expression of a large number of contributing causes ; and not the least of these is that of the operation of the powers conferred on banks of issue. Indeed there is scarcely any other department where Parliament has made its influence more directly felt than in monetary legislation, and it has generally been in the interests of the bankers who, in return for political influence, have had conferred upon them monopolies¹ that deeply affect commercial relations

¹ "The country bankers were the social and political despots of the small boroughs, and in Peel's day these small boroughs were the supports of his party. To have affronted the country bankers, to have exacted pledges of integrity from them, would have been to imperil the maintenance of Conservative principles among those who aided the party at Westminster."—*Economic Interpretation of History*, by Professor Thorold Rogers, vol. i. p. 225.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

and ultimately *prices*. And, as to contracts, it is surely the duty of Government to see that only fair contracts should be legal. The contracts, for instance, of the money-lender are condemned by the moral sense of the people: and of late that has been so strongly expressed, that a Special Commission has been appointed to investigate the operations of the money-lenders.

But, to take a still wider view of our subject, it is claimed "that the main discoveries or conclusions of economic science during the last hundred years have been adverse to State interference."¹ The grounds upon which this statement rests are: that economic considerations have obliged the Crown to grant to colonies the right of self-taxation; to abolish protective tariffs, and certain navigation laws which were adverse to commerce, and the old Poor Law; and to give to labourers the right of free combination. In all of these instances it is held that "the beneficial activity of Government" has been "theoretically contracted rather than enlarged." But what of the other instances in which the Government's activity has been displayed? Have the conclusions of economics been opposed to Education, Crofter, Land Allotment, Workmen's Compensation, and similar Acts, all of which have told, and are still powerfully telling, in favour of the people's welfare, of the perfection of life social and moral, and, therefore, of the stability of society? It is of the essence of economics to find out the best conditions under which the people may live. Economics, rightly understood, entirely agrees

¹ *Vide* Professor Amos, *Ibid.* p. 378.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

with the aspirations of the people after better conditions of life. Doles of charity like those given under the old Poor Law, the tying down of labourers to certain localities as was done to miners, the penalties imposed upon those workmen who combined in order to discuss their grievances, were naturally condemned by economics ; but not the less emphatically does it approve of all that has been done of late by Government in passing the beneficent Acts that have been named ; and these, so far from limiting the Government's beneficial activity, have opened up new fields for its exercise.

Parliament, however, cannot stop at these Acts, and economics will certainly support further action ; for, it is now an axiom of the science that the ultimate end of all Parliamentary action is the good of the people, and that whatever makes for their well-being ought to be pursued. This principle justifies the granting of the franchise, and invests the Legislature with the moral authority for interfering in all departments of the nation's life. Among writers on the science of politics, who generally cast their influence on the side of the economics of the schools, but to whom also the teachings of history are important factors in forming their opinions, no one has more distinctly or fully recognised this principle than Professor Amos. After a thorough investigation of the question of Governmental interference, he pronounces in favour of such subjects as the land, public burdens, locomotion and communication, public health and public companies, being within the province of Government. Thus, he says that if the Government fails to interfere in the

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

land question, "the problem can only increase in magnitude, and its solution be attended with ever greater difficulty, and apparent, if not real, injustice and hardship;"¹ that since the educated and wealthy exercise preponderating influences in the distribution of public burdens, it is "the most indisputable province of government to effect a counterpoise to these influences, and to secure an equable distribution of all kinds of burdens, so that the actual amount of sacrifice to the support of the State be, not only quantitatively but, really proportioned to the means of each;"² that "the right of the State" to interfere is indisputable so far as means of locomotion is concerned, for "Government is bound to see that the bulk of the population, or even that considerable classes of the population, are not put at an undue disadvantage by the improvements of which the wealthier classes make so great and profitable a use;"³ and that since the railway, shipping, and banking interests are abundantly protected by their respective Parliamentary representatives, "it is within the province of Government to protect the great mass of the population who may be described as unmoneyed" against such undue pressure as is "exerted by the mere power of associated wealth and enterprise."⁴ When publicists make such acknowledgments as these, it may be assumed that the time is not far distant when Government will be urged, by the force of public opinion, to interfere in affairs which hitherto the professional politician has only been too glad to leave untouched. There are, indeed, many signs that the people are awakening to

¹ *Ibid.* p. 400.

² p. 404.

³ p. 405.

⁴ p. 411.

THE POLITICAL BASIS

a sense of the direct bearing which all these questions have upon their well-being. Political education is making great advances among the people ; and, as society depends for its endurance upon the goodwill of the large masses who are poor, as well as upon the support of the educated and rich, the wisdom of enlightened statesmanship will suggest a beneficial interference on the part of Government in all those departments where the people's interests lie and are affected.

IX

The Religious Basis of Society

I

FROM the earliest times religion has been an important element both in the formation and development of social relationships. It deserves, therefore, a close and careful study. Prominence must, indeed, be given to religious beliefs if a successful attempt is to be made to explain social life; for these beliefs act and react powerfully upon society; they influence conduct, and give to men's actions character, direction and vitality. Man is both moral and spiritual, and cannot rest satisfied with material things. There is that in him—in the savage whose religion is fetich, and in the agnostic who worships the Unknowable—which cries out for One who can be known, a Person whom he may reverence, worship, and obey. To attempt an explanation of human society and at the same time neglect religious phenomena is to leave out of account an element, the lack of which renders any conclusions that are drawn one-sided and defective. Religion, therefore, having played, and being certain

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

still to play, an essential part in the moulding of society, is one of the phenomena that must be considered ; for it is in the last degree unscientific not to take note of it.

It is, however, true that one of the most distinctive features of at least many adherents of one school of philosophy, and of a large number of the exponents of physical science, is that they have endeavoured to eliminate religion. The evidences of the attitude which they have taken up are too numerous to be gainsaid ; and since, therefore, so many distinguished and competent writers have tried to dispense with religion, or, if they deal with it at all, only to treat it as a fiction or superstition, it is necessary to consider what can be said in support of the attitude they have chosen.

The philosophical school which has largely set religion aside is the utilitarian. This school numbers among its members, such men as Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill, Austin, Lewis and many other well-known writers ; and "with respect to most of them," says Mr. Sheldon Amos, "a vehement reactionary spirit has been more noticeable than a simple and uncomplicated search after scientific truth. They have thus been usually indifferent to the necessity of patient historical investigation, on the results of which alone a sound inductive process could be based ; and, furthermore, have been antipathetic, if not hostile, to every form of religious belief."¹ There have been, it is true, "theological utilitarians," and these, so far from being opposed to religion, have rendered it good ser-

¹ Vide *The Science of Politics*, p. 55.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

vice, but their utilitarianism is, to say the least of it, very inconsistent with the religious principles they have adopted; and one proof of the truth of this criticism is found in the circumstance that they have had few followers. On the other hand, it was a natural development from the philosophic position which consistent utilitarians chose that they should discard religion; for, finding no bases for morals other than those which experience or custom supplies, they could only with considerable difficulty have accepted the contribution to ethics which religion makes.¹ According to their view, the acceptance or rejection of the religious element in society, then, depends upon other questions which, in the first instance, it is the province of psychology to answer; and having professed to find nothing in the operations of mental faculties that favoured religious postulates, they quite consistently sought an explanation of society in other things than in religion.

The ground taken up by many of the exponents of the physical sciences in their rejection of religion is quite different from that of those just named; for it is the strong and emphatic affirmation of many scientists that they can discover no evidence of religion in the things which they investigate. Mental and moral phenomena are only the last products of a long series

¹ Mr. Lecky questions whether the utilitarian's "unflinching hostility to superstitions" can be justified on his own principles, since superstitions "often meet and gratify the inmost longings of the heart." But utilitarians would readily dispense with such gratification as superstition affords, because, as they hold, deeper satisfaction can be obtained if all religious beliefs were eliminated. Vide *History of European Morals*, vol. i., pp. 50, 51.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

of physical changes; and in order to explain social phenomena the last thing, they hold, that should be taken into account, is religion. Those who thus take up this position—and all thorough-going evolutionists are obliged to adopt it—come into conflict, not only with religion, but also with mental science; and as the capacity to make abstractions, and broad generalizations from ascertained data has not yet been explained by any physical theory of the universe, man with these mental qualities is a problem which they have not yet solved; and for still higher reasons, they cannot account for the religious side of man's nature; for, man as a religious being entertains and attempts an explanation of the most transcendental ideas of God, the world, and his own final destiny. This inability takes the form of denying religion. Religious beliefs, they hold, are the merest fictions and nothing else. Religion is only superstition, and must disappear before the imperial advance of science. But, manifestly, religion cannot be dismissed in this easy and off-hand manner. To deny its existence is not to disprove it.

There is, it must be admitted, a certain advantage in clearly perceiving the position which those take up who thus discard religious phenomena. To examine the features of society from their point of view is a duty we owe to ourselves as much as to them. For, having it as our object to ascertain what gives to social relationships their vitality and general characteristics, while according to them all the liberty they claim in explaining society apart from the influence which religion has exerted, we, on our part,

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

have an equal right to sift their statements and to inquire whether human society can be accounted for apart from religious phenomena.

It is a rather notable circumstance that the scientists who offer such a strenuous objection are those who may be described as naturalists or men engaged in observational science. Eminent physicists like Lord Kelvin, Professor Stokes, and others who deal with pure science, such as mathematics, are seldom found pronouncing dogmatic opinions on questions that belong to the spiritual realm.¹ That task is undertaken by those scientists who, in prosecuting their studies, are constantly obliged to make hypotheses even in their own departments; and perhaps the habit thus acquired accounts for their readiness to make such postulates as offer an explanation of all phenomena apart from religion. Mr. Huxley, Mr. Spencer and many others might be cited as representatives of the scientific school, which is not content with the fascinating task of unfolding the secrets of nature, but must needs also enter into the moral sphere and attempt an explanation of all the phenomena which belong to that sphere, by employing the same principles and hypotheses that apply to the material world. The task, however, thus undertaken cannot be accomplished with success, and that because the two realms are quite different. The laws which obtain within them may be analogous, but they are not identical, as Professor Drummond, in his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, supposed them to

¹ Romanes says that he was led to think favourably of Christianity because the greatest exponents of pure science had accepted it.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

be; and, therefore, all attempts to explain their respective contents leave many things without a satisfactory solution. It may, indeed, be questioned whether those who have had a special training only, either in physical science or in mental and moral philosophy, and who have spent a lifetime in the study of the one or the other, can be capable of pronouncing judgments in a province other than that which they have made their own. Within his own field the scientist may speak with authority, and so in his own sphere may the mental and moral philosopher; but to many naturalists this reasonable limitation is not a barrier that cannot be surmounted. They enter the moral realm, and with their physical apparatus in hand attempt to explain all mental and moral phenomena. That is, indeed, what is seen every day; and it is quite distinctive of our times that men like Professor Huxley have spoken with as much dogmatism on moral and religious questions as any theologian has ever done. Lured by the inviting fields lying before them, they have also solutions to offer with respect to social questions. These for the most part are economically individualistic, and politically conservative, though Mr. Russel Wallace is an exception in offering a thorough-going socialistic solution.

II

Objection has been taken to religion, as such, by the two schools to which reference has been made; they discard all religions as unwarranted and as disturbing elements in human progress. The unaccountable

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

waywardness, the folly, the ignorance, and the fears of men have, in their judgment, given rise to religious rites and worship, and every effort ought to be made to get rid of them; but religion cannot be thus set aside, for it supplies the sanctions for social progress and taking history as our guide, civilization cannot be explained if religion be eliminated. Men, even the most savage, recognise that they are dependent upon a higher Power than their own. The profoundest philosophy, too, reaches the conclusion that there is "a reasonable meaning or end in the universe" and that there is "an unwavering humanism as opposed to the naturalism of those who would crush the spirit of man by thrusting upon him the immensities of physical nature, of infinite space, and endless time."¹ Submission to the will of a higher Power is universally recognised; but in the nature of things much depends upon the ideas that are entertained respecting the character and will of the Supreme Being; and the history of all religions shows that men are, or at least aim at becoming, what they conceive the object of their worship to be. The conceptions formed act and react upon the mind and heart, and upon the character and pursuits of the worshippers.

The life that is thus produced is at once a test and proof of the religion professed; and tried by this standard, the value of any given religion may be estimated. If, for instance, we take the religion of ancient Egypt or Assyria, the value of the worship of Apis or Baal is ascertained from the ruthless practices which it

¹ Vide Essay on *Mr. Balfour and his Critics, Man's Place in the Cosmos, and other Essays*, by Professor Andrew Seth, LL.D.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

sanctioned; or if Vedism, Brahminism, and Mohammedanism, the great religions that have dominated the East, be examined, their character is seen in the imperfect social life they have developed; or, again, if the religion of classic Greece or imperial Rome be taken, it is not difficult to ascertain what worth belongs to the one or the other. The Greek marked a distinct advance, for it contained elements of great beauty. The Roman included sterling virtues; but both failed through not recognising the rights of man as man. Those who lived outside the limits of the Greek Republic and Roman Empire were not brothers but aliens, and had no rights. This limitation, therefore, stamped their respective religions with imperfection, and made the basis of social life narrow and insecure.

The Christian religion must be submitted to the same test; and so tried, we observe, first of all, that the introduction of Christianity marked a great departure from old ways and old conceptions. Insisting upon many things which minister to life, it also and chiefly laid emphasis upon brotherhood. It taught also that all men have equal rights, and set itself, by the enunciation of new principles, to sweep away all barriers that stood in the way of a union of individuals and community of interests. It proclaimed the reign of altruism, and thus supplied the ethical force which in course of time rendered slavery and feudalism repugnant to the moral sense of men; and that because both slavery and feudalism rested upon ideas of inequality, and assumed that large masses of men had no rights. Christianity struck at the root

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of these false ideas, and in the history of the race there is nothing more splendid than the victories which it has thus won, and the beneficent influence it has exercised. But we do not require to go to distant times in order to see the operations of Christian principles. They are telling upon society to-day, not perhaps so decisively as might be desired, yet they are operating with effect. Witness, for instance, the political equality that has been granted to large masses of the people, and the wide-spread efforts that are being made to win social equality. Or, to take a still more notable illustration: in the labour disputes of our time one of the most powerful elements that make for settlement is not the vast wealth of masters on the one side, or, on the other, the patient endurance of the workers during periods of strikes, but the volume of moral power that ever accompanies ideas of brotherhood and the rights of man, as man. The conscience of the people, informed by Christianity, exerts a powerful influence in favour of what is right, and refuses to give its sanction to the claims of the one side or the other unless in so far as they are just. It may be difficult to define the influence which is thus exerted; but when great industrial disputes take place, appeals are made through the *press* and on many platforms, by both parties to what is fair and reasonable; and though sometimes sheer wealth or numbers may gain a temporary victory, in the long run, the issue is generally in accordance with the dictates of conscience as informed by Christianity. The long struggle to get rid of slavery and feudalism bears testimony to the au-

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

thority of conscience ; and though it may be impossible to forecast the form which the settlement of industrial disputes may take, yet, since the same ethical force is in operation, the ultimate issues can scarcely be uncertain. If, then, Christianity is tested and tried, even in this limited way, by what it has already accomplished, there is much that may be urged in favour of its claims.

A mistake would, however, be committed, if it were assumed that the claims of Christianity are uncontested. On the contrary, while a systematic assault is being made upon all forms of religion, Christianity is assailed in a special degree and manner. (1) Its moral influence on society is denied ; and (2) the supernatural basis, on which its ethics relies, is questioned.

(1) As to its moral influence on society and the good which it has effected, these are seen in the state of Christendom to-day ; for European countries are very much what the Christian religion has made them. We do not say that European kingdoms, bearing the Christian name, have been altogether and entirely true to the Christian principles which they profess. The ideals of Christianity are, indeed, far from having been realized by any Christian country ; but even after all defects and shortcomings have been taken into account, it is impossible to explain the progress which has been made in Europe apart from the influence of the teachings of Christianity. This definite claim has, therefore, been respectfully urged ; but it is just because Christian apologetics contends that such influence has been

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

exerted that Christianity itself has been assailed. The contest is carried on without much abatement. On the one side, there are those who hold that "belief in Christ, as the Head of humanity, is the most comprehensive and authoritative of human bonds."¹ On the other, there are those who, with Mr. Spencer, maintain that "moral injunctions are losing the authority given by their supposed sacred origin," and hasten to establish "rules of right conduct on a scientific basis."² It can scarcely be claimed that the effort to account for social progress in European countries, or that the endeavour to provide a basis for further advances, apart from the principles, ideals, and motives of Christianity, has been crowned with success. The number, indeed, of those who thus hope for success must be small, and cannot increase; for, on the one hand, they have to interpret social progress without Christianity, and, on the other, they set before themselves the hard task of laying new foundations for society, and building thereon, an entirely different fabric from that which at present exists.

(2) The supernatural basis on which the ethics of Christianity rests has also been assailed. It is now perceived more clearly than ever that you cannot separate the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, such as those of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, from its moral teachings. Both stand or fall together; for our Lord unfolded the high truths of His kingdom, and, resting all His claims upon His

¹ Vide *Order and Growth*, by Rev. J. Llewelyn Davis, p. 64.

² Vide *The Data of Ethics*, Preface, p. viii.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

own Person, called men to obey His moral precepts. The teachings of Christ cannot, therefore, be separated from Himself. This being now clearly seen, the attacks which are made upon Christianity are conducted with the view of explaining away the supernatural. They are not, however, based so much upon questions as to the credibility of miracles, the historicity of the Evangelists' narratives, and the worth of the evidence of Patristic writings, as upon questions which are raised whenever the doctrine of evolution is applied to religion. The former set of questions was that which the author of *Supernatural Religion* discussed with great literary ability, but not with that accurate learning which his subject required ; for, as Bishop Lightfoot has conclusively shown, his interpretations of the writings of the Fathers often need correction.¹ But more important than the question of the accuracy of the author's learning are the dogmas which he himself lays down as to "the brotherhood of man" and "love to God." Respecting these, Bishop Lightfoot observes that "his arguments prove nothing because they prove too much ; for they are equally efficacious, or equally inefficacious, against the doctrine of a Divine providence, or of human responsibility, as they are against the resurrection of Christ" ; but "with a noble inconsistency he clutches at these 'dogmas' to save himself from sinking into the abyss of moral scepticism."² Within recent years the line of argument which the author of *Supernatural*

¹ Vide *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, pp. 33 et seq.

² *Ibid.* p. 28.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Religion adopted has been to a great extent abandoned. While it was in vogue it was quite manifest that a blow could not be successfully struck at the historicity of the Scriptures without also hitting the ethics of Christianity. The Christian religion is not at present directly assailed, but the supernatural, as such.

All who understand the trend of thought in educated circles know that the doctrine of evolution has been boldly applied to religion; and they are also aware that if Christianity is only the flower and fruit of a long evolutionary process, then there is anything but a sure foundation for the great truths and beliefs of Christianity. We do not wish to be misunderstood in making these statements. We admit that Revelation was progressive and was given gradually, bit by bit, as men were able to take it in, and that in Christianity it comes to its fulness; but, according to any interpretation that can be offered, the Bible narrative throughout assumes that Revelation has a supernatural origin. Once and again it gives an account of supernatural interpositions which arrested the current of human history and directed it into new channels. All this is inconsistent with evolution as generally understood; for the doctrine of evolution assumes a natural development without a break. The supernatural cannot find a place within this doctrine; and if any one believes that it may, then he has changed the meaning of the term, and has read into it new ideas. That may be legitimate enough; but it might be better if another term were chosen, and "evolution" were left to

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

those who cannot sincerely admit of supernatural interpositions in human history.

It is with full knowledge of the great issues at stake that the doctrine of evolution has been applied to religion. Christianity and all other religions are subjected to a new test. One has some hesitation in taking up a negative attitude towards evolution; for he cannot avoid at least seeming to oppose the verdict of natural science and the conclusions to which many distinguished scientists have come. It may, however, be said that though evolution is a captivating conception, and has much that seems to support it, there are yet many things which must be still more fully demonstrated before it can be accepted as a well-established doctrine. But evolution, even at the present stage of proof, is applied to religion. Most of the recent Gifford Lecturers have examined its claims; and some of them have taken it as the interpreting principle in discussing the question of religion. Professor Max Müller, deeply versed in philology, in his Gifford Lectures, examines the grounds upon which religious beliefs rest in the light of Comparative Religion; but while he largely employs the historical method, he cannot resist the strong inducement to read religion in the light of evolution. Professor Caird employs the evolutionary method, but he makes statements which many evolutionists would not readily accept; for when he says that "the change which we call 'development' is always *qualitative* as well as *quantitative*,"¹ the first of these terms implies that at certain stages

¹ Vide *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. p. 50.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

of the development, qualities which did not originally belong to the religious germ have been introduced ; but if this has happened, then there must be elements in religion which evolution does not explain. Professor Bruce, while not committing himself to a definite view,¹ holds that evolution is a conceivable process.² He interprets, however, religious phenomena not in terms of evolution, but in those of a providential order in the universe. Professor Tiele adopts evolution as his working principle in explaining religion, but he can scarcely be regarded as having successfully answered the objections which have been taken to evolution.³ He makes an important acknowledgment, for he says that "the Gospel, rightly understood, contains the eternal principles of true religion"; he thinks that new forms of the principles of Christianity may yet be developed, but how the developments will take place he does not venture to predict. Besides the Gifford Lecturers, many others have recently discussed the question of religion in the light of the results of researches in natural science. Among these, M. Auguste Sabatier

¹ *The Providential Order of the World*. "It is not yet a settled matter that man is out and out the child of evolution," p. 24.

² "Why should evolution of intellect and conscience exclude God, any more than evolution of physical organization? If God be immanent in the universe, then He is in this part of the evolutionary process not less than in others. Evolution is simply His method of communicating to men the light of reason and the sense of duty," p. 45.

³ Vide *Elements of the Science of Religion*, pp. 42-45, where his answers will be found.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

occupies an important position.¹ He examines mental phenomena in the light of all that science has to say ; but, following Max Müller more closely than the other writers referred to, he employs the historical method in his interpretation of religion. His conclusions are, that a basis is laid for a filial relation to the Supreme Being in the teachings of Jesus, and that Christianity, as taught by Him, is the absolute religion. Christianity, he holds, will outlive all changes, both because of its filial element, and because it contains the power of adapting itself to the thought of every epoch, and meets the deepest needs of men.

It is a great gain which is secured when independent thinkers, conducting investigations in so many departments, reach the conclusion that Christianity alone of all religions affords the fullest satisfaction to, and answers the deepest wants of man's nature, on its religious side. All other religions which have commanded the obedience of millions of our fellowmen, while containing much that is true, are singularly defective ; and their defects are reflected not only, as we have already seen, in the imperfect civilization, but also in the worship which has been developed under their sway. Awe rather than reverence is that which they produce in the minds of the worshippers, and is their chief characteristic ; but where awe obtains, the borderland of fear is reached, and fear again is antagonistic to the truly religious spirit. Religion, indeed, only approaches perfection when it

¹ Vide *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion Based on Psychology and History*.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

begets reverence and evokes a filial trust ; and when it imparts new principles, new motives, and new aims. The religion which accomplishes these ends lifts man out of his selfishness, and powerfully makes for right social relationships. Christianity, with its message of grace, claims to do all these things. It ought, however, to be said that there is not on the part of independent investigators a consensus of opinion as to the claims of Christianity. The results of inquiries are not decisive. While admitting its superiority to all other religions, many experience a difficulty in attempting to reconcile Christianity and evolution. He has no insight who maintains that the idea which evolution expresses is not a great aid to the right interpretation of the moral order of the universe, and says that it is of little value in explaining religious phenomena ; but he is equally precipitate in his conclusions who holds that all things, religion included, must be understood in the terms of evolution. Human life is a profound mystery. Supernatural interpositions, gracious in character and beneficent in aim, are facts in human history ; and of these interpositions the Incarnation is the greatest. The Person of Christ and His work, indeed, constitute the surprise of history, a surprise which is repeated in the experience of every person who is brought to perceive the uniqueness of His Personality and to apprehend the value of His redemptive work. For, these flash their light across his path, and he stands surprised, wondering why he did not sooner see that Christ satisfies every demand of the human heart and sums up in Himself all goodness.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

III

How the Christian religion satisfies man's deepest needs, and at the same time makes for the highest social relationships, is seen, if consideration be given *first* to the relationship which the term religion indicates, and *second* to the distinctive 'notes' of Christianity.

Canon Liddon¹ and Principal Fairbairn² have pointed out that the essence of religion consists in the recognition of the relationship which subsists between God and man. The Most High is independent of all His creatures, and therefore of man. He is the Absolute, the Unconditioned, infinitely higher than man's highest thoughts of Him, just as He is infinitely holier than man's holiest thoughts can conceive Him. But though infinitely high and holy, subtle ties of relationship run out from Him and find their object in man. Having created man, He stands in a definite relation to him as the creature of His hands and the subject of His moral government. Man, again, on his part, is conscious of his own identity. He can reflect upon himself as a person. He knows that he is; but whenever he thus reflects or turns his thoughts upon himself, he at once recognises that he stands towards God in a relation of dependence; that he owes all things which he possesses to God; and that he is amenable to Him for all his actions. The recognition of this relationship lies at the root of religion. The knowledge of its contents largely determines the

¹ Vide *Some Elements of Religion*, pp. 20, 21.

² *Religion in History and in the Life of To-day*, p. 21.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

quality, character, and intensity of his religious life. Feelings of awe and fear, or of reverence and trust, take possession of the human breast according as God is apprehended as mere *Power* or as *Love* and *Truth*.

If we fall back upon the results of psychological investigations, and take feeling, thought, and will as the "faculties" of selfhood, we shall discover that all these enter into the relationship of which religion is the expression, and contribute to the religious life. Feeling is an essential element in religion. The heart's affections are evoked by the object of worship. These give warmth and energy to the religious life. One of the greatest of modern philosophers has, indeed, said that the essence of religion is "a feeling of absolute dependence." Though having a distinct tendency towards idealism, Schleiermacher thus laid special stress upon feeling. It is somewhat difficult to account for Schleiermacher's neglect of the moral element. It may have been due to his peculiar religious training in the Moravian Church, or, as Pfeiderer surmises, to the influence which Spinoza ultimately exercised over him. "We can hardly be wrong," says Pfeiderer, "in tracing the origin of this defect to the influence of the philosophy of Spinoza, whose *cognitio Dei intuitiva* is nothing else than the reference of all finite phenomena to the necessary causality of God; that is, the feeling of our dependence upon it."¹ But however explained, there can be no doubt as to the influence which Schleiermacher's famous utterance has exerted upon subsequent think-

¹ *Development of Doctrine*, p. 106.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

ers. Feeling has been unduly exalted, and made the sole test of religion. This is a great mistake; for while feeling has a distinct and important place, the religion which is essentially based on feeling must be wanting in moral endeavour. If the idea of dependence is made absolute, moral choice is excluded, and freedom becomes a mere name without moral content.¹

To feeling, therefore, there must be added knowledge. An informed mind is as necessary as warmth of feeling. The intellectual is as essential to religion as the sentient element. Where there is no knowledge of the object worshipped there can be no true religion. But knowledge by itself and alone, is not enough; for religion is infinitely more than mere intellectual apprehension. One may have a cultivated intellect and yet not be religious. A perfect creed is not an adequate substitute for a religious life. The mind must, indeed, be informed. The objects, too, which it apprehends have a reflex action upon the religious life. If, for instance, they do not bear directly upon the claims which each man has on his fellows, the religion which is merely an intellectual exercise, and nothing else, may have, as accessories, the most elaborate ritual and ornate worship, but it cannot be either strong or make for life. On the other hand, if it inculcates lofty thoughts and high ideals and enters wide, inviting fields of service, it becomes healthy and elevating. But while all this proves the necessity for

¹ Höffding associates "religious feelings" with dependence, and remarks, "If religion and ethics come into disagreement, the passive and active poles of our nature are opposed."—*Outlines of Psychology*, p. 262.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

the intellectual element in religion, intellectual apprehension alone is not religion.

Hence the *will* must also make its contribution to religion. The will is the efficient cause that makes morality possible. It selects motives and ends, and gives to conduct its character. "Conduct," says Professor Seth, "points to character or settled habits of will. But the will," he adds, "is no mere faculty, it is a man's 'proper self.' The will is the self in action."¹ Without discussing the psychological postulate which is thus stated, we agree with Professor Seth when he assigns to the will the power of determining conduct and, therefore, character. The mind perceives a given course of conduct. The will resolves to pursue it. Feeling may act upon the will. For, as the wind tells upon the ship which the helm directs, so feeling or passion may tell on the will. Now the storm may send the vessel along her course; now the hurricane may drive her on the rocks. The wind may be too strong for the helm. So is it in human life. The will gives direction and determines conduct, but sometimes passions overpower the will. Hence life's shipwrecks. Man, however, is responsible for the government of his feelings. Passions only master the will when they have been long indulged without restraint. Man is endowed with freedom of will. He can choose his course. The right exercise of the will is true moral action. The will, then, which explains moral purpose must make its contribution to religion. Obedience to the law of right is part of a religious life.

But religion, while including feeling, thought, and

¹ Vide *Ethical Principles*, by Professor James Seth, p. 5.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

will, is more than any one of these, more indeed than all these together. It is more than feeling, mere subjective states; more than thought, mere assent to a series of propositions even when these embrace the most transcendental truths; more than will, mere obedience to moral law. It is more than all these together, for while it includes the sentient, the intellectual, and the moral, religion is essentially the recognition of one's personal relationship to the Supreme Being; and the religious life is lived when the great ideas as to God, man, and the world which the mind entertains, and the warmth of the heart's affections, guided by a high moral purpose, are applied to all human relationships—the individual, the family and the State; and that with the object of purifying and ennobling these relationships, which, again, are the essential elements in society.

IV

Taking this conception of religion, an attempt to apply it to Brahminism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism would lead us too far afield. Fortunately it is not necessary to make such an attempt. For the civilization which Christianity produces when compared with that of any of these religions is seen at once to be higher and better. The reverence and trust, too, which Christianity begets, when contrasted with the awe and fear which these religions engender, place the Christian religion on a far higher plane. Besides, competent and impartial witnesses are unanimous in recognising, as Tiele and Sabatier have

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

recently done, that Christianity is the absolute, "the perfect religion." We limit ourselves, therefore, to an examination of the distinctive "notes" of the Christian religion, and to these especially as they tell upon society.

1. Christianity claims to throw a flood of light upon man's relationship to God. It illumines that relationship. It teaches that God is Creator and that all things are dependent upon Him. Rigid rules are not, however, laid down as to the process of creation. Some of its exponents have, it is true, committed themselves to hasty statements which find no support in anything said in the Scriptures. Room is left for the most thorough, if reverent, investigation as to the laws under which things animate and inanimate have come to be. The Christian religion contents itself with affirming that God is the Creator, and that all things are, and were created for the manifestation of His Purpose. Creation, though it implies man's dependence, does not in any way exclude freedom and moral responsibility. On the contrary, the Creator is also the Lawgiver. The imposition of law carries with it the idea of man being free to obey or disobey the law. Man's relation to God is, therefore, that of one responsible to Him, and amenable, as a moral agent, for all his actions. From the first until the last revelation of the Divine Will there exists an ever increasing volume of evidence that the Divine Purpose is both beneficent and gracious. The imposition of law even contains elements of grace. It is another torch lit to show men the way. That light may often only reveal how far man has de-

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

parted from the right. The giving of law is, however, a gracious act, and is a prophecy of still further grace to be given. Creation and the events of all subsequent epochs must, indeed, be read in view of God's final Purpose. Christianity makes it manifest enough that the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, came as light comes with the rising sun, and that in flooding the world with Light, He had it as His ultimate aim to bring man into a filial and harmonious relation with God.

No real benefit is gained, but rather much injury is done, if Christianity is stripped of its saving truths. It is all that it claims to be, or it is nothing. Either the way of life is revealed, or we are in denser darkness. The life of the individual and that of society are either lifted up to an infinitely higher level than man ever dreamed possible before Christ lived, or greatly impoverished. The too critical spirit may be impatient of all that cannot be interpreted in terms of natural law; but the inquirer after truth must be prepared to enter the realm of grace, within which the operations of a Divine Purpose are seen, and must be ready in a reverent, sympathetic spirit to examine the Divine solution for the ills of human life, and the perplexing questions that lie at the root of human society. Christianity offers its saving truths. These must not be confounded with the elaborate doctrines that are embodied in the great creeds of Christendom. For however much as defensive documents—and that is the true function of creeds—they may have expressed the attainments, judgments and insight of those who prepared them, they are not

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

final statements of truth. A return must, therefore, be made to the teachings of Christ, and *these must be read in the light of Christian experience*. For that is as necessary as a return to the historical Christ. When these two things are done, all that is really vital in Christianity will become more and more luminous. It will then be clearly seen that Christ solved the problem of sin by taking it away, and that all who trust in and obey Him are brought into His own filial relation to the Father. The honour of Christ's work on behalf of man is, that by becoming one with the race, and also Sin-Bearer, He brings man into this relationship. Man is still the creature dependent on the Creator; he is also under the law of the Lawgiver though the conditions of obedience are changed; but he now, in addition, stands towards God as a son of His household. The relation is one of perfect harmony. Service is its note. Self-seeking is excluded. These things, it will readily enough be allowed, lay deep the foundations of society, and at once purify and elevate social life.

2. Christianity, without attempting anything like an elaborate proof, takes it for granted that man has rights of which he cannot be despoiled, and duties which he is bound to discharge. It makes obligations rest upon rights, duties upon privileges. The legal order is thus reversed. The rule is not "do this and live," but "because you are enriched with rights and privileges, the very nature of these obliges you to discharge your duties, and that, too, in the spirit which the knowledge of the greatness of these gifts inspires." We owe it to Christianity that rights and

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

duties are equally emphasized. The very poorest have claims which cannot be gainsaid. It is not a matter of grace, but of right, that they should enjoy opportunities for the development of their moral and physical powers. For, unless these be granted, they cannot be charged with obligations which the possession of rights alone implies. Where rights are denied, those who take them away also take upon themselves the corresponding duties. Much within recent times has been said as to the necessity of laying emphasis upon duties. It is urged that if men thought less of their rights and more of their obligations, a better social state would soon be realized. This is true enough; but since duties rest upon rights, the former only exist where the latter are enjoyed. The Christian religion lays the utmost stress upon being true to one's duties, but it emphasizes just as strongly the rights of men. Duties and rights have equal prominence. The balance has been nicely preserved between them; but the preservation of the balance is not the most noticeable feature. It is rather, that there are no duties too onerous and no sacrifice too great to impose upon the Christian, because he is invested with the greatest rights and the highest privileges. One with Christ in His relation to the Father, all things belong to him. "All things are yours," says St. Paul, addressing fellow-Christians, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours; for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."¹ To many this may seem mere rhetoric, or

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

far too Utopian ; but here judgment largely depends upon the measure of one's insight into the life which Christ imparts. But whatever the judgment respecting these possessions, it is plain enough that the insistence upon rights and duties has sent a new moral force through the channels of society, and has made for truer social relationships. Christianity thus broadens the basis of society, and lays deeper its foundations.

3. Christianity aims at the reconstruction of society by its proclamation of the kingdom of God and its doctrine of brotherhood. Its great announcement is that the kingdom of God has come. "The kingdom of God" is the formula in terms of which all the truths of the Christian religion are explained. It was the phrase which Christ constantly employed ; and within this exhaustive category all privileges and duties find a fitting place. Men are saved and are made a kingdom, βασιλεία, and priests τῷ Θεῷ.¹ Christ is King. His supremacy is not inconsistent with filial feelings. It has been urged that there is no room for filial devotion where the rule is that of king and subject. This is, indeed, the strongest objection which has been taken to the interpretation of the contents of Christianity by the use of the phrase "the kingdom of God." It is, however, overlooked, when this objection is urged, that Christ is not King in an arbitrary manner, but because He possesses those qualities which entitle Him to rule and reign. The qualities are love and righteousness. To these belong kingly power.

¹ Rev. i. 6.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

They alone have regal authority. But nothing evokes such a volume of filial affection as love and righteousness. There can, therefore, be no element of constraint where these obtain. Christ has them in infinite degree; all His followers have them in more or less perfect measure. As King He reigns, and His people are loyal because they are loving subjects.

Within the kingdom of God the Christian doctrine of brotherhood finds a fitting place. The society which Christianity aims at establishing is "a unity of humanity in Christ."¹ Exegetes have not done justice to the absolute and emphatic statements: "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right² to become³ children of God." "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."⁴ "Ye are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."⁵ Many other passages might be quoted to the same effect; but apart from the citation of such passages, it must on reflection be manifest enough that only through Christ, the Head of restored humanity, can there be conferred the new nature which is the true basis of brotherhood; the new principles which oblige Christians to live not for themselves, but for others; and the new motives which issue in brotherly service. "Men," observes

¹ Vide *Christianity and Socialism*, by Rev. Alfred Barry, D.C.L. Introduction.

² John i. 12. ἐξουσίαν, *power, right, authority*.

³ γενέσθαι, *to begin to be*, implying *origin*.

⁴ Rom. viii. 15 (R.V.). ⁵ Gal. iii. 26 (R.V.)

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Professor Schmid, commenting upon Christ's words,¹ are "children of their heavenly Father if they are like Him in spiritual and moral respects, inwardly pervaded by the same spiritual life, especially by the same love as it exists in Him."² Christ came "to seek and save," but He saves in order that those who are made members of His kingdom may be made sharers of a new nature, and therefore become a brotherhood. All who are within the kingdom must, therefore, realize their solidarity, and render willing service. Endowments and gifts are bestowed for use. Christ's purpose cannot, indeed, be fully accomplished until humanity is entirely reorganised. Upon the Church is laid the responsibility of furthering His kingdom. Her members profess to be followers of Christ. They bear His name. But the Church must not be confounded with the kingdom. The Church may be negligent, and fail to labour for ends for which she has been instituted. Other agencies may be chosen. For, all who strive for the reign of righteousness and the rule of love, whether they perceive it or not, are working in the interests of Christ's kingdom.

V

We have examined some of the more outstanding "notes" of Christianity which bear upon social relationships. We now make one legitimate inference. It is, that if the influence which the Christian religion exercises upon society is to have a fair oppor-

¹ Matt. v. 45.

² *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, p. 101.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

tunity of operating with effect, its great leading truths must be applied to the social questions of the day. Salutary changes in our social system must be the result of change of character. Christianity effects such a change, and all social reforms must therefore start from the new principles, new motives, and new ideals which it imparts. Not elsewhere nor otherwise can a basis be laid for a right social state, and the ethical force necessary for the preservation and health of society be found. Evil is constantly asserting its baleful influence and destroying the fairest social schemes. But Christ, as Representative of humanity, met and broke the power of evil. Personal union with Him is the only guarantee for the suppression of selfish impulses, and the destruction of the spirit of greed, which is the bane of society at the present day. These things are the alphabet of Christianity, and no one who is informed as to its teachings can question them. Many, however, who profess to follow Christ do not seriously ponder the final purpose of Christ, to attain which He is ever summoning them to be fellow-workers with Him. His kingdom is, however, absolute, and "can admit no compromise." It is spiritual, and enlists in its service all that is highest in man's nature. It is destined to be universal, and is necessarily aggressive.¹ But many followers of Him who "pleased not Himself,"² but "emptied Himself,"³ seem to believe that it is not inconsistent with their profession, to disregard the social conditions of

¹ *Vide* Bishop Westcott's *The Two Empires*, in his Epistles of St. John, pp. 255-267.

² Rom. xv. 3.

³ Phil. ii. 9.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

the tens of thousands of their fellow-men who can scarcely be said to live, but rather to pass an existence, in hovels reeking with vice and squalor.

It is a comfortable and an easy religion which permits men to gain positions of power, and to amass wealth without questioning the means by which both are obtained, or the use that is made of them. This, however, is not Christianity. Fortunately, too, the false representations that are made, do not prove it untrue. But even when this is said, it is still to be confessed that the greatest barriers to the progress of Christ's kingdom are just those altogether inadequate ideas which so many who profess to follow Him entertain. They assume that there are wide fields within which human interests lie, and that Christ has nothing for them to do in the regulation of these interests. "Hands off politics and social questions" is their motto, as if the spheres which these terms indicate, and the questions which belong to them were not intensely human; or as if it were possible to hope for the final triumph of righteousness, and the complete organization of society, without insisting upon the claims of Christ in relation to every department of human life.

That many Christians do not really see the purpose of Christ, and do not really believe that His kingdom is destined to be universal, His will being regnant everywhere and in all relationships of life, is beyond dispute. How to explain their position is difficult in the extreme. Is it, as Dr. Hatch suggests, that Christ's teachings have been "transmuted by the slow alchemy of history into the ethics of Roman

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

law"? and that "the basis of Christian society is not Christian, but Roman and Stoical"?¹ Or is it, as Dr. Dale says, that many Christians regard the commands of Christ as too Utopian and not homely enough?² Or is it, as Professor Iverach states, that "even Christian commentators seem somehow to lose courage in the presence of these broad, strong, ethical judgments of Jesus Christ," and, "as a consequence, the breadth, and universality, and unconditional character of His teaching have been obscured, and even the people who profess to follow Him hardly ever get face to face with the moral ideal of Jesus Christ without a veil between"?³ Whatever the explanation, the rate of progress at which Christ's teachings are being translated into life by His followers is very slow. Geology measures the period of the earth's slow formation in terms of millions of years. If the physical has taken so long a time, the moral may require an equally long period. Nothing in either realm is done in a hurry. This, however, cannot be a justification for the moral blindness of those who profess to see all duties in the light of Christ's teachings. The fear is, either that they do not see their obligations, or that they look at them through the mists which self-interests create, and so apprehend them imperfectly.

There is, therefore, all the greater need for an emphatic and earnest insistence upon obedience to Christ's teachings. He may demand great sacrifices,

¹ *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 169.

² *Laws of Christ for Common Life*, p. 211.

³ *Christianity and Evolution*, pp. 192, 193.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

like that, for instance, which He made at the hands of the rich young man who wished to know how he might obtain eternal life: "If thou wilt be perfect," said Christ, "go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me."¹ Certainly, if Christianity is to reach its goal, its ethical principles must be applied to the economic and social questions of the day. The establishment of right social relationships is one of its chief ends. Christ must be supreme. He commands the use of our possessions as much as He claims our praise. He waits with infinite patience; still He expects His servants to apply the great saving truths He has revealed, to the regeneration of society. For, indeed, Christianity is more a life than a creed. Its truths may receive a scientific setting. To find out how each truth has its own fitting place, is highly instructive. It makes for information of the best kind; but when, at considerable labour, that is done, the final purpose for which revelations of truth have been given is not reached. Scientific expositions are only means to an end. They make the principles of life clearer; but it must not be forgotten that, after all, they are only aids towards realizing the kingdom of God, and making God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

VI

Christianity deals with the whole domain of human life. It presents a psychological explanation of life that is true to the facts of human experience. "It

¹ Matt. xix. 21.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

assumes a certain original essence, as well as inward dissolution and perversion, complete renewal, and future perfection of human nature.”¹ Its great doctrines of sin, redemption, regeneration, etc., are all founded upon definite conceptions of human life. Its ethics takes character from the revelations that have been given of the Divine Will, but appeals are not made to that Will alone. The moral in man is directly addressed, and man’s moral nature responds to the Divine commands, acknowledging them as reasonable and just. Conscience thus answers to the imperatives of the Divine Will, and at once confirms our belief in God and in His goodness.² Christianity has not laid down definite economic rules or enunciated political maxims; but just as it deals with psychological and ethical questions on broad general principles that are true to experience, so it takes all social problems, economic and political, and looks at them in the light of the eternal verities of the kingdom of God and the ultimate Divine Purpose. It avails for the individual, but it is also and chiefly social. M. Fouillée makes the pertinent remark, *tout ce que nous avons de propre-*

¹ *Biblical Psychology*, by Professor J. T. Beck, Preface, p. vii.

² The testimony of man’s moral nature is thus described by Mr. Lecky: “Our knowledge of the Supreme Excellence,” he says, “our best evidence of the existence of the Creator, is derived, not from the material universe, but from our own moral nature;” and he quotes Coleridge as saying that “the one great and binding ground of the belief of God and an hereafter is the law of conscience;” and he adds that our moral faculty is our one reason for maintaining the supreme benevolence of the Deity, as Kant taught.—*History of European Morals*, vol. i. p. 55.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

*ment humain est collectif et social.*¹ Christianity anticipates this conclusion. "The Christian," says Bishop Westcott, "is not and cannot be isolated. Our life is essentially social. The individual himself cannot be the final unit of society, though the civil law, up to a certain point, so treats him. Whatever we do or refrain from doing affects our 'brethren' and the world. So far as the power of love is not realized in action, we relapse into paganism."² The fundamental conception of the kingdom of God, too, implies community of interests. In an earlier work, the same distinguished prelate affirms that "endowments of character, of power, of place, of wealth," must be regarded by all who are within the kingdom "as a trust to be administered with resolute and conscious purpose for the good of men."³

With all the wealth of affection which Christ's great solicitude for man's well-being alone explains, the Master calls His followers to apply Christian principles to the social duties of the day; and that with the object that human society may be regenerated and reorganized; but many who profess to follow Christ conceive their religion as merely a scheme which saves from penalties, and do not perceive that its loudest call is to employ gifts and endowments in making the lives of their fellows brighter and better. The neglect of this duty, the failure to respond to this call, accounts for the attitude

¹ *Le Mouvement Positiviste et la Conception Sociologique du Monde*, p. 326.

² Vide *Christian Aspects of Life*, pp. 36, 37.

³ *Social Aspects of Christianity*, p. 147.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

which many of the working classes have taken up with respect to the Christian religion, and, in some degree, gives colour to the complaint of those who hold that while Christianity avails for the individual, it fails as a social force.¹ It is, however, not the fault of Christianity, as such, if its great verities are not made to tell on social life. The fault lies at the door of those who have formed inadequate conceptions of the ends for which they have been called into Christ's kingdom. For Christianity makes for progress. "Progress is not only a vital fact in the history of the kingdom of Christ, it is its vital law."² "No system of beliefs, no theory of ethics, has ever taught so distinctly as Christianity does that man is not an irresponsible being, at liberty to do whatever he chooses. None has laid greater stress upon justice, love, and mercy as the qualities that make for the highest social life; and, therefore, whatever may be the defects, weaknesses, sins, of our actual Christianity, no one can doubt it is the great motive force of the service of humanity in all its aspects of material, social, spiritual beneficence."³

But the moral qualities upon which Christianity lays the greatest emphasis are those which bear most directly and efficiently upon social life. It is also within the social sphere that Christianity must ultimately win some of its greatest triumphs. The difficulties there are the greatest; for the last thing which men willingly surrender is their possessions.

¹ *Vide* p. 169.

² *Christ and Economics*, by C. W. Stubbs, p. 97.

³ Rev. Alfred Barry, D.C.L., *op. cit.* p. 157.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

Many, however, are beginning to perceive that the ethics of the Christian religion must be applied to the entire social life. In some instances they have been reluctantly driven to this conclusion by the loud call which modern society utters for a solution of its perplexing problems; and on reflection, they have become persuaded that Christianity alone contains the solution demanded. Witness, for instance, the labours of the members of the "Christian Social Union," and the many works dealing with Christianity and social life which have quite recently been issued by the most distinguished churchmen of the day. It would be a mistake to assume that the task which these have undertaken can be easily accomplished. Opposition of the most strenuous kind must be expected. For, in addition to those who have rejected Christianity, many of its adherents positively refuse to plead for an application of Christian principles to economic and political questions. These questions, they maintain, are outwith the province of the Christian teacher. They likewise complain that social reformers are too much taken up with material things, and limit themselves too exclusively to the material world. It may be said at once, that there are social reformers who think and speak chiefly of material things, and that thus they leave a large part of man's higher nature untouched. It would, however, be unfair to hold that this limitation is characteristic of all who aim at social changes; for many of the most distinguished advocates of social reforms perceive clearly, and teach distinctly, that better material conditions are but means to high

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

ethical ends. But even if some do an injustice to themselves, and the cause they represent, that is not a sufficient reason for saying that all who labour with them for material improvements, see and work for nothing higher than material things.

VII

But who is really to blame for these defective and one-sided conceptions of life? The Church, with a few notable exceptions, has stood aloof from the social movements of the day. If these have taken a wrong direction, or if those who have felt the beat and throb of the new life that has been so unmistakably manifesting itself, have developed imperfect and false ideas, the Church, which has given them no assistance to form right ideas, can scarcely become reprover. That would be to add affront to neglect. The Church's teachers have, to a large extent, been content with developing theological systems, and have left it to men, some of whom are actually hostile, and others merely indifferent, to religion, to deal with the questions which affect society most deeply. Theologians have, indeed, often laid such emphasis upon their theories as if creeds were final, and have so much neglected to show the practical application of the verities of the Faith that a not unnatural recoil has taken place; and some social reformers, going off at a tangent, have unduly laid stress on material conditions.

But these things apart, it is in this world that the Christian expects God's will to be done as it is in heaven. For that he has been taught to pray; and,

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

unless his religion be an empty profession, he must labour for the realization of this ideal. If so, then all departments of life ought to be made to feel the purifying and elevating influence of the truths of the Faith. But so long as monopolies of place, of power, and of means are tolerated, and the Church of Christ has nothing to say respecting these monopolies; so long as the claims of love and righteousness are unheeded by Christians, and the great masses of the people suffer on account of the operations of unjust enactments; and so long as Christian principles are studiously held aloof from economic and political issues, lest in some indefinable manner religion should suffer, the will of God is not being and cannot be done on earth. But if not, it is the veriest impiety to pretend to be seeking what are vaguely termed "spiritual things," while the practical duties of justice and mercy are neglected. No religion has suffered more than Christianity from the mistaken zeal of uninformed persons. But great as is the harm which these do, it is paralleled by the neglect of the theologian who, devoting more time to some long forgotten heresy than he gives to vital social questions of the day, fails to enter the inviting fields of economics and politics, and does not insist upon applying the invaluable contribution which his science makes to all questions in which the ethical is the most important element; for economics, while it deals with production and distribution, is essentially concerned with moral issues. Right politics is legislation based on justice. Both economics and politics affect the social state.

THE RELIGIOUS BASIS

The Christian religion, with its fundamental truths of man's relation to God and to his fellow-men, enunciates the principles which make for social well-being, and supplies the strongest and purest motives to disinterested service. It sets up the highest ideals, and proclaims them to be attainable. The material, however, is not despised ; for, as on the one side of his being, man is physical, and on the other, spiritual, it employs the physical in the interests of the spiritual. How a person governs his appetites, which are physical, and uses his possessions, which are material, affords unmistakable evidence of the spiritual ends after which he professes to aspire. The one cannot here be separated from the other. "Man is not a spirit, for the spiritual element in him is interwoven with the sensible life. He is not an animal, for the sensible element in him is interwoven with higher spirituality." ¹

Welfare and well-being are not contradictory, but complementary. It is within the social state, which affords opportunities for rendering unselfish service, that the truths of religion are tested and their worth proven, as the theories of the shipbuilder and marine engineer are put to trial when the vessel which they have constructed is launched on the ocean. In religion, social science finds great ethical and spiritual principles, which, when taken into its service, render self-sacrifice easy, and give to the hardest task a special charm. Self-sacrifice is a chief "note" of Christianity. How it works out one's own good and that of society may not be easily seen or explained ;

¹ Professor Beck, *op. cit.* p. 7.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

but, again, as the mariner relies upon his chart, and finds that it guides him safely over the trackless sea, so the truths of religion, of which self-renunciation is one of the highest, are a guide and chart to all who, sailing over the sea of life, avail themselves of their aid. Religion thus makes its great contribution to the solution of the questions which social relationships present. With psychology and ethics, economics and politics, it ranks as one of the sciences of human life, and is also an essential element of society.

Index

A.

- Alexander, Prof. S., on evolution, 147.
 Allen, Mr. Grant, 206, 217, 219.
 Alphabet of Christianity, 359.
 American Senate, 317, 319.
 Amos, Prof., 289, 295.
 Anthropological psychology, 36.
 Antiquity of man, 10-16.
 Argyle, Duke of, on Mr. Spencer, 145.
 Aristippus, 80.
 Aristocratic government, 305.
 Aristotle's theory of the State, 84-5 ; of virtue, 85 ; identification of morals and politics, 86.
 Association of ideas, 35.

B.

- Bacon's separation of ethics from religion, 109.
 Bagehot, Mr. Walter, 23-27, 29, 315.
 Barry, Dr. A., 357.
 Beck, Prof. J. T., 363, 369.
 Bentham, 121.
 Biology and ethics, 38.
 Blanc, Louis, 249, 274.
 Bogdanovitch, M., 307.
 Brahminism, 337.
 Bright, John, on land-tax, 196, 221.
 Brotherhood, 356-7.
 Bruce, Prof. A. B., on the date of book of Job, 88 ; on ethical element in religion, 157 ; on ethics and economics, 161 ;

on evolution, 344 ; on the slow progress of the Kingdom of God, 168.

- Bryce, Prof. James, 319.
 Buckle, W. H., 49, 50.
 Burke, Edmund, on shorter Parliaments, 320.

C.

- Cabinet government, 311.
 Caird, Prof. Edward, 104, 123, 188, 216, 280-1, 303.
 Cannan, Edward, 193.
 Capital, 199.
 Care needed in studying social phenomena, 5.
 Chamber, second, functions of, 312, *et seq.*
 Charm of social studies, 4.
 Christ, the Head of humanity, 340.
 Christ's life a revelation, 159, 160 ; Christ ever coming, 163.
 Christian ethics, 154-168.
 Christian principles applied to nations, 169-174.
 Christian postulates, 155 ; Christian socialistic society, 262 ; Christian social union, 262.
 Christianity and altruism, 162, 337 ; on its defence, 164-67 ; and evolution, 343 ; and the ideal of society, 41, 42 ; and labour disputes, 338 ; and social reformers, 177.
 Clarke, Samuel, 114.

INDEX

- Clodd, Edward, on the use of hypothesis, 22; on science, 129.
 Cobden, 221-3.
 Commerce and individualism, 228-9.
 Comte's "law of the three stages," 64; and insistence on feeling, 34.
 Conceptions, bearing of the social on the mental, 34.
Condition necessary to character, 304.
 Conscience, variability of testimony of, 159; freedom of, 232-3.
 Consciousness of kind, 63.
 Contract and alliance, 63.
 Co-operative movement, 257.
 Cosmic evolution, 151; cosmic process *v.* the moral, 150.
 Creeds, true function of, 353.
 Cudworth, 107, 110, 111, 115.
 Cumberland, 112.
 Cynics, 79.
 Cyrenaics, 80.
- D.
- Dale, Dr. R. W., 361.
 Darwin's theory of natural selection and the moral sense, 28.
 Dawson, Sir J. W., 13.
 Deploige, M., 298.
 Dicey, Prof., 321.
 Divine purpose, 282, 284, 286, 353.
 Drummond, Prof. H., and ascent of man, 147; and on natural and spiritual laws, 324.
 Duties and rights, 355.
 Dyer, Dr. Henry, 278.
- E.
- Economics, service of, 181-4; relation to psychology and ethics, 185-6; to politics and religion, 186-90; element of, questioned, 178.
 Epicurean school, 97-101.
 Erdmann, Prof. J. E., 76, 112.
 Ethical basis of society, 72.
 Ethical conceptions largely determined by standard of conduct, 72.
 Ethical purpose and the supernatural, 156.
 Ethical theories and environment, 131-34.
 Ethics universally applied by the Stoics, 103.
 Ethnology, its testimony to origin of man, 28.
 Evans, Sir John, 11.
 Evolution, gospel of, 129-30.
 Evolution and the highest life, 142; interpreted by Mr. Spencer, 144; applied to morals, 146.
 Evolution and mental and moral judgments, 17, 18.
 Evolution of ethics, 54, 63.
 Evolution of institutions, 5.
 Evolutionary ethics, 139-153.
 Evolutionists' dislike of moral terminology, 60.
 Exchange of commodities, 205.
- F.
- Fabian Society, 261.
 Fairbairn, Principal A. M., on religion, 347.
 Family, the, original unit of society, 64.
 Fathers of the Church on ethics, 105.
 Fawcett, Mrs., 247.
 Ferguson, Adam, on society, 23, 48-9.
 Fichte developed subjectivism, 118.
 Fiske, Mr., on the organism theory of society, 39.

INDEX

Fouillée, 47 ; his sociological conception of society, 68.
 Foundations of society can be known, 3.
 Fourier, 249, 274.
 French Revolution, 134.

G.

German thought, influence of, 134.
 Giddings, Prof., on "consciousness of kind," 63 ; on society, 139.
 Governmental action, 324-28.
 Graham, Prof., 184.
 Greef, M. de, 63.
 Greek religion, 337.
 Green, Prof., and idealism, 124.

H.

Haeckel, Prof., 9, 175.
 Hamilton, Sir Wm., on mental analysis, 33.
 Harper, Prof. Andrew, on religious education, 163.
 Harrison, Frederic, 169.
 Hartley rests moral distinctions on physiology, 5.
 Hatch, Dr., 360-1.
 Haushofer, Prof., 273.
 Hebrews, the, contribution to ethics, 88-9.
 Hedonism, dawn of, 77, 80.
 Hedonism, individual and universal, 53.
 Hegel, 119-20.
 Herron, Prof., on centralization of wealth, 273.
 Historical study necessary, 46 ; testimony of history, 47-8.
 Hobbes' theory of the state and ethics, 110.
 Höfding, 349.
 Holland, Canon Scott, 238.
 House of Lords, 315-17.
 Hume's theory of sympathetic pleasure, 116.

Huxley, Prof., on cultured reflection and moral ideas, 56-7 ; on the ethical process, 151 ; and dogmatism, 335.
 Hypotheses, employment of, 7 ; greatly multiplied of late, 9 ; necessity of, 21.

I.

Idealism, 74 ; adopted by Cudworth, 107 ; doctrine of, 122 ; and intuitionism, 123, 126-27.
 Imitation, 63.
 Impulse to social study, 4.
 Income tax, 196.
 Individualism, its genesis, 211-17 ; its forms, 217-23 ; its factors, 224-34 ; and socialism, 231 ; the good service it has rendered, 240-1.
 Influence of the spirit of the age, 50.
 Inquiry based on history or science, 8 ; necessity of, 20 ; its final object is truth, 29.
 Intellectual school of moralists, 6.
 Intuitionism, objections to, 125 ; agrees so far with idealism, 128, 158, *et seq.*
 Iverach, Prof. J., 152, 361.

J.

Joly, Prof. N., 7.

K.

Kant makes conscience supreme, 117.
 Kidd, Benjamin, 3, 182.
 Kidd, John, 18.
 Kingdom of God, 162, 357-8.
 Kirkup, T., 189, 245.
 Knight, Prof., 155.

L.

Labour, 197 ; remuneration of, 198.
Laissez faire, 135.

INDEX

Land, 195.
 Lassalle, 268.
 Laurie, Prof. S. S., 126.
 Lecky, W. E. H., 332, 363.
 Leibnitz, 117.
 Liddon, Canon, 149, 347.
 Locke's theory of natural law as
 the basis of society, 113.
 Lubbock, Sir John, 10.
 Lyell, Sir Charles, 10.
 Lytton, Lord, 171.

M.

Maine, Sir Henry, 14, 287.
 Mallock, W. H., 207.
 Marshall, Prof., 3, 182, 193, 194.
 Martineau, Dr. Jas., 115, 137,
 168.
 Marx, Karl, 266, 268, 272, 274.
 McKechnie, Mr., 187, 219.
 McKenzie, Prof. J. S., 75.
 McTaggart, Mr. Ellis, 39.
 Mechanical theory of society,
 67.
 Mellone, Dr., 33.
 Mill, J. Stuart, 222, 225, 242 ;
 on property, 259.
 Misconceptions regarding what
 socialism proposes, 270-4.
 Mivart, St. George, 16.
 Mohammedanism, 337.
 Moral authority, seat of, 126.
 Moral ideas traced by Mr.
 Spencer to heredity, 53.
 Moral influence of Christianity
 on society, 339.
 Moral intuitions the basis of
 duty, 156.
 Moral sense a product of the
 social factor, 139.
 Moralists divided in opinions, 5.
 Morals, 146 ; not a fixed theory,
 107.
 More, Henry, 111.
 Morley, John, 169.
 Mosaic land legislation, 246.

Muirhead, J. H., 136.
 Müller, Prof. Max, 10, 17.
 Münsterberg, Dr. Hugo, on
 psychological laboratories, 32.
 "Mutual aid" theory, 54, 63.
 Mystics, 105.

N.

Noetic synthesis, 35.

O.

Optimism, 236-7.
 Organic theory of society, 67.
 Origin of idealism, 102.
 Orr, Dr. James, on evolution,
 19, 20.
 Owen, Robert, 269.

P.

Pan-Anglican conference, 262.
 Pantaleoni, Prof., 183.
 Parliament and social reform,
 231, 237, 238, 257.
 Parliamentaryism on its trial,
 297, 305-10.
 Person of Christ, 346.
 Pfeiderer, Prof., 348.
 Plato, 82-84.
 Plebeians and Patricians, 291.
 Plumptre, Dr., 218 ; on reforms,
 258.
 Pobyedonostseff, M., 308.
 Political art, 285 ; relationships,
 287 ; education, 296.
 Political organization, 180 ; not
 enough, 181.
 Politics and economics, 6.
 Profit-sharing, 257.
 Property, rights of, 234.
 Proportional representation, 298.
 Province of social science, 1, 2.
 Psychological analysis, 31 ;
 laboratories, 32.
 Psychological hedonism, 36.
 Psychological postulates, 55.

INDEX

Psychology, its explanation of society, 31.
 Psychology, its relation to ethics and economics, politics and religion, 43-4.
 Psychology, New, 32.
 Pusey, Dr., and evolution, 19.

Q.

Quatrefages, M. de, 10.

R.

Raleigh, Mr. Walter, 288.
 Rawlinson, Canon, 15.
 Redemptive work of Christ, 346.
 Referendum, 298.
 Religion, difference of opinion respecting, 6; and social life, 330; effort to eliminate, by utilitarians, 331; by scientists, 332-5.
 Revelation progressive, 342.
 Ricardo, 197.
 Robertson, Prof. Croom, 227.
 Rogers, Prof. Thorold, 325.
 Roman religion, 337.
 Ruskin, John, 194, 241.

S.

Sabatier, Auguste, 345.
 Saint Simon, 249.
 Schäffle, Dr. A., 272.
 Schleiermacher on *feeling of dependence*, 349.
 Scripture, Dr., 32.
 Second Chambers, 312.
 Selby-Bigge, Mr., on psychological analysis, 31, 115.
 Sentimental school of moralists, 6.
 Seth, Prof. Andrew, 336.
 Seth, Prof. James, 125.

Shaftesbury, Lord, and child labour, 223.
 Shaftesbury merges ethics in psychology, 5.
 Shaftesbury, the first to declare for intuition, 115; and to recognise the ethical content of religion as its chief recommendation, 115-16.
 Shorter Parliaments, 301.
 Sidgwick, Dr., 107, 120, 288, 311, 323.
 Slavophilism, 306.
 Smith, Adam, 168, 199, 226.
 Smyth, Dr. Newman, 254, 324.
 Social Democratic Federation, 261.
 Social utopias, 66.
 Socialism, an economic theory, 245; its ideals, 248; its claims, 252; its proposals, 259; debt we owe to Socialists, 280-4.
 Socialists, State, 265, *et seq.*
 Society an organism, 37; defects of this conception of society, 38, 39.
 Society conceived as a unity, 67; advantages of this conception, 69-71.
 Society, elements of, 8.
 Socrates, 77-79.
 Sophists' theory of morals, 77.
 Sorley, Prof., 104, 136, 289, 291.
 Spencer, Mr. Herbert, on *feelings*, 33; indebtedness to his predecessors, 107-8; on moral consciousness, 139; strictures on Prof. Huxley, 153; on "irrational altruism," 164-167.
 Spinoza, 119.
 Stephen, Mr. Leslie, on moral law, 59, 143.
 Stewardship, 234-5.
 Stoic school, 90; its defects, 93; its positive tenets, 94-6; and Christianity, 96.

INDEX

Stout, G. F., on analytic psychology, 35.
 Supernatural element and morals, 156.
 Supernatural, the, in Christianity, 340.
 Sweating, 207.
 Swiss political system, 298.

T.

Tarde, M., 63.
 Teachings of Christ, 278; of the Apostles, 282.
 Ten years' conflict, 134.
 Theologians and social movements, 188-9.
 Tiele, Prof., 344.
 Titchener, Prof., 43.
 Tractarian movement, 134.
 Trench, Archbishop, on miracles, 156.
 Tyndall, Prof., and the aims of natural science, 18.

U.

Utilitarianism owes much to Bentham, 117, 120-21.
 Utilitarians, modern, 74.

V.

Value of a high conception of life, 34.
 Value, theory of, 205.
 Vedism, 337.

W.

Wallace, A. Russel, on 'breaks' in evolutionary process, 18.
 Walpole, Sir Spencer, on House of Lords, 315.
 Watson, Dr. John, on millionaires, 200.
 Wealth, 194; exchange of, 200; distribution of, 208.
 Weddas, 16.
 Welfare and well-being, 369.
 Westcott, Bishop, 177, 314, 359, 364.
 Wilson, Rev. John, 150.
 Woodbridge, Prof., 53.
 Workmen's Compensation Act, 257.
 Wundt, Prof., his objections to Spencer's theory of nerve-cells, 54; classification of ethical systems, 72.



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